WORDSWORTH AND THE PICTURESQUE

By

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Using Heinrich Woelfflin's malerisch (which M. D. Hottinger translates variously as "picturesque" and "painterly") to designate a continuum between a picturesque object and a painterly way of looking at objects, it is possible to look for Wordsworth's progress along a continuum from the objective to the subjective, i.e., from a concern with the object in itself to a way of looking at objects. The characteristics of Woelfflin's term malerisch coincide with those of the picturesque set forth by William Gilpin, Uvedale Price, and Richard Payne Knight--massing, broken line, movement, and incorporeal space. Wordsworth applies these characteristics to poetry. The difference between Wordsworth's 1793 and 1800 picturesque poetry lies in his freeing himself from massing: he challenges Gilpin's

artificial predominance of shadow and finds more realistic ways to describe what he sees. The result is his adoption of Price's "brilliance" and "splendour" and his exploitation of space surrounding indistinct objects. After 1814, Wordsworth's picturesque becomes more ornamental, almost mannerist, as he crowds created similes and metaphors into remembered picturesque scenes. Thus, Wordsworth does not abandon the picturesque as has been thought but develops the picturesque to its fullest capacity.

The picturesque enables Wordsworth to move out of the confines of a static, controlled, linear vision into a moving, free, and painterly vision of the world and from a harmony of separate parts to a fusion of parts--an organic unity which includes the poet. Wordsworth's picturesque brilliance assumes the eighteenth-century moral function by teaching natural morality; his picturesque splendour teaches the relatedness of objects in terms of love. The new, formless, transcendental being in the landscape illustrates the non-empirical dimension with which Wordsworth replaced the anthropomorphic classical gods. After 1814, however, Wordsworth closes the identity of the Presence by equating it with God. Wordsworth's and Constable's styles are parallel illustrations of these picturesque principles in poetry and painting, particularly in their use of Price's "brilliance" and "splendour."

CHAPTER 1
THE VISUAL PICTURESQUE

Introduction

It has long been established that the young Wordsworth participated wholeheartedly in the picturesque tradition of landscape description, and I shall argue that he used picturesque principles throughout his career. My hypothesis specifically is that the psychological effect of his landscape description depends in part on picturesque principles of light, movement, and space.

According to Christopher Hussey, Walter Hipple, and Wylie Sypher, the picturesque can be divided into the visual picturesque and the associative picturesque.[1] According to Hussey, Archibald Alison's Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste (1790) first brought association to the visual picturesque of the eighteenth century (Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature, p. 15). On the other hand, Sypher finds three sources of the associative picturesque: the mechanistic from David Hartley, the creative from Archibald Alison, and the historic from John Ruskin (Sypher, 91-94, 95-100, and 103-109, respectively). In Hartley's mechanistic association the spectator's spontaneous feelings become attached to the objects he observes simultaneously.

In Alison's creative association the spectator projects his previously existing moods onto the scenery. In Ruskin's historic association, the spectator recognizes man's previous activity in the landscape.

In all three types of association, emotion actively originates in the spectator, whether he experiences an event while he is at a particular site, colors the landscape with his current mood, or remembers the history of a ruin. In the visual picturesque, on the other hand, landscape evokes feeling in the passive spectator. In other words, the spectator passively receives emotion-producing impulses from the landscape. This theory can be traced from Edmund Burke to William Gilpin and Uvedale Price, who are primarily visual picturesque theorists. Richard Payne Knight, on the other hand, deals equally with the visual and associative picturesque.[2] As a follower of Alison, Knight is usually connected with the associative picturesque, but, as quotes from Knight in this introduction will show, he deals equally with the visual picturesque.

John Dixon Hunt in <u>The Figure in the Landscape</u>[3] points to this dual source--visual or associative--of picturesque emotion: in "objects outside the mind" and in "a habit of the subjective mind":

> What was basically at issue throughout the latter part of the century was whether the aesthetic and emotional experience could be located in objects outside the mind (Price and Gilpin provide versions of that) or whether (Knight and Alison are the chief spokesmen here) it was not the

> property of the thing itself but a way of looking, a habit of the subjective mind. (p. 242)

As a late eighteenth-century phenomenon, Wordsworth's poetry includes both this visual and associative picturesque. Both require extensive analysis. Due to the extent of this project, I will restrict my analysis to Wordsworth's visual picturesque as a prelude to a psychological analysis of Wordsworth's associative picturesque.

Heinrich Woelfflin's theory of art history provides a heuristic code for understanding the visual picturesque.[4] In his Principles of Art History Woelfflin deals with visual picturesque aspects of landscape, whether or not they include associative features, such as "the ragged beggar," "the ruin," or "more costly costumes" (Principles of Art History, p. 24).

Woelfflin's term malerisch designates this visual style of painting, which appeared during the high Renaissance as an alternative perceptive mode to the linear or tactile style of artists such as Raphael and Michelangelo. Woelfflin's translater, M. D. Hottinger, translates malerisch most often as "painterly." However, according to Hottinger, Woelfflin's term includes two aspects--objective and subjective: malerisch "has in the German, two distinct meanings, one objective, a quality residing in the object, the other subjective, a mode of apprehension and creation. To avoid confusion, they have been distinguished in English

as 'picturesque' and 'painterly' respectively" (Principles, p. 3, note). Hottinger therefore translates the objective aspect--the painterly object--as "picturesque" and the subjective aspect--the viewer's painterly way of looking at objects--as "painterly."[5]

In the original text, Woelfflin calls the objective pole the "Motivisch-Malerische," literally "thematic painterly," which refers to the painterly quality of the object itself. He uses "Pittoreske" as a synonym for this (Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe, p. 30). Woelfflin calls the subjective pole the "Eigentlich-Malerische," literally "intrinsic painterly," which refers to the painterly way of looking at objects, whether or not they are painterly in themselves. This "Eigentlich-Malerische" is a more general painterly view of the world ["eine allgemein malerische Auffassung der Welt"].

Woelfflin also calls the "Motivisch-Malerische" the "Dekorativ-Malerische" [decorative-painterly] because it has a more materially-objective character ["mehr gegenstaendlich-objektivem Charakter"]. Woelfflin finds this "Motivisch-Malerische" to be the preliminary step [Vorstufe] to the "Eigentlich-Malerische." Furthermore, this decorative-painterly does not stop where objectivity stops [allein es hoert nicht auf, wo das Gegenstaendliche aufhoert], but it continues, as it does in Rembrandt, into the "Eigentlich-Malerische" or intrinsic-painterly.

Thus, the "Pittoreske" belongs to the "lower," objective end of a continuum of painting style whose higher or more "general," i.e., subjective, end is translated "painterly." Therefore, as two manifestations of the term malerisch, the "Pittoreske" and the painterly share fundamental characteristics and differ only in degree. In fact, the picturesque is often the objective ground of the painterly. To simplify this matter, we can say that the picturesque is a lower form of the painterly, or that the painterly is a higher form of the picturesque. In any case, picturesque and painterly qualities overlap.

When we use the term "painterly," we may refer to both the painterly object, i.e., the picturesque, and to the painterly way of seeing, i.e., the intrinsic painterly. In this analysis I will use the terms picturesque and painterly as synonyms, unless it is necessary to distinguish between their objective and subjective qualities, in which case I will refer to them as "picturesque" and "painterly."

I therefore base my definition of the visual picturesque on a synthesis of Woelfflin, Gilpin, Price, and Knight:

> The visual picturesque is a style of describing or depicting landscape, or scenery, which produces the illusions of movement, merging objects, and non-corporeal space by means of four techniques: 1) breaking and dissolving lines, 2) massing, 3) making light and shadow play over forms, and 4) dissolving forms in atmospheric light. When it is necessary to distinguish between objects and the way one sees those objects, the word "picturesque" will be restricted to the former, "painterly" to the latter.

This term is almost identical to Woelfflin's malerisch, whose characteristics include massing, indistinct forms, and the independent play of light, motion, and space. As we will see later, these characteristics are also found in the work of Gilpin, Price, and Knight.

The most striking picturesque characteristic is movement: "Klar ist zunaechst soviel, dass der Sprachgebrauch jedes Formganze als malerisch bezeichnet, das, auch wenn es ein Ruhendes ist, einen Bewegungseindruck ausloest" [First, this much is clear: usage designates as painterly that composition which releases an impression of movement, even when it is quiescent] (Kunstgeschichtliche, p. 29).

This movement is a function of both "intricacies of the form" and "peculiar aspects and illuminations." "Intricacies of the form" occur where the form is foreshortened or broken: "the picture-form becomes different from the object-form" and creates an impression of movement "in which recession plays an essential part" (Principles, p. 25). Motion also results from massing and broken lines--which produce "intricacies of the form"--because indefinite forms have no clear-cut lines to stop or separate them from other forms, and therefore they seem to merge or move into each other. This merging creates a state of "restless" "becoming" instead of "conceivable" "being" (p. 10). Not only do these indistinct masses seem to move but

the light passing over them seems to move also:

> As soon as the depreciation of line as boundary takes place, painterly possibilities set in. Then it is as if at all points everything was enlivened by a mysterious movement. While the strongly stressed outline fixes the presentment, it lies in the essence of a painterly representation to give it an indeterminate character: form begins to play; lights and shadows become an independent element, they seek and hold each other from height to height, from depth to depth; the whole takes on the semblance of a movement ceaselessly emanating, never ending. Whether the movement be leaping and vehement, or only a gentle quiver and flicker, it remains for the spectator inexhaustible.
>
> . . . Many elements go to produce the impression of a general movement . . . but the emancipation of the masses of light and shade till they pursue each other in independent interplay remains the basis of a painterly impression. And that means, too, that here not the separate form but the total picture is the thing that counts, for it is only in the whole that that mysterious interflow of form and light and colour can take effect, and it is obvious that here the immaterial and incorporeal must mean as much as concrete objects. (pp. 19-20)

The motion from "peculiar aspects and illuminations" includes two types: when "the light or the shadow passes over the form, i.e. conflicts with the distinctness of the object" (pp. 25-26), and when "the light flits and glides in space" as at twilight when "forms are dissolved in the dimly lighted atmosphere" (p. 26). Woelfflin illustrates the first type of picturesque light--light passing over the form--with a "picturesquely illuminated church interior." [In this entire section Hottinger translates "malerisch" as "picturesque."] Here, light reflected from objects produces an overall movement in an otherwise static scene: "If here the falling sunbeam breaks through the darkness and,

apparently wilfully, traces its figures on columns and floor, that is typically a sight at which popular taste says with satisfaction, 'How picturesque!'" (Principles, p. 26).

Woelfflin illustrates the second type of picturesque light--atmospheric light or light independent of objects--with the "picturesque twilight hour." Here atmospheric light produces picturesque movement in an otherwise static scene: "Forms are dissolved in the dimly lighted atmosphere, and instead of a number of separate objects, we see indeterminate lighter or darker masses which flow together in a common tonal movement" (p. 26).

In other words, picturesque light can be either reflected from objects or atmospheric, i.e., independent of objects:

> It may be intricacies of the form which of their very nature produce a picturesque effect, or peculiar aspects and illuminations; over the solid, static body of things there will always play the stimulus of a movement which does not reside in the object, and that also means that the whole only exists as a picture for the eye, and that it can never, even in the imaginary sense, be grasped with the hands. (p. 24)

"All-pervading movement" is thus characteristic of the picturesque scene, independent of any moving objects in the scene, even though individual objects can also be moving: "We can still isolate as something special those themes in which the single form is so entwined in a great context that an impression of all-pervading movement arises. If real movement is present, so much the better, but it is not

necessary." In other words, even seemingly static scenes--if treated picturesquely--will have an overall movement.

The ultimate significance of the picturesque, then, is that it ushered in a new way of looking at the world, the painterly way of looking, with its attendant spiritual and physical freedoms:

> What is commonly denoted as a picturesque theme is more or less only the preliminary stage to the higher forms of the painterly taste, and is historically of the greatest importance, for it is just in these more outward picturesque effects that the feeling for a completely painterly apprehension of the world seems to have developed. (p. 27)

Painterly Versus Linear

Woelfflin's distinction between the painterly and the linear helps to distinguish between Wordsworth's style and the style which preceded him. According to Woelfflin, the linear style preceded the painterly, and I claim that a linear poetic style preceded Wordsworth's painterly style.

According to Price and Knight, the picturesque style originated in the sixteenth century with Giorgione and Titian. Even though Woelfflin considers Titian transitional, Woelfflin similarly divides sixteenth-century painting into the visual or "painterly" and the tactile or "linear."

Woelfflin's terms painterly and linear refer to the two ways in which painters look at the world and, consequently, to the two classes of paintings. Basically, Woelfflin's distinction between the painterly and the linear is based on line and mass: 1) In the linear, line determines the path of vision and guides the eye around the edges; in the painterly, line disintegrates into indistinctness. 2) In the linear, the object is perceived by its tangible character--in outline and surfaces; in the painterly, the object is perceived impressionistically by surrendering to the mere visual appearance and abandoning "tangible" design; 3) In the linear, the limits of objects are stressed; in the painterly, objects lose their distinct edges. 4) In the linear, objects are seen as isolated volumes; in the painterly, objects merge into an organic whole. 5) In the linear, objects are perceived as solid, static, tangible bodies; in the painterly, objects lose their separateness and the world is apprehended as a shifting semblance (Principles, p. 14). Thus, in the painterly there are no longer classic, beautiful lines but "new, wild lines, broken, dispersed, and multiplied" (p. 29). The result is a distinction between "being" (linear) and "becoming" (painterly).

Thus, the linear focuses on line, the painterly on mass (p. 18). Consequently, in the linear style the eye concentrates on edges, i.e., on outlines: the eye is "led along the boundaries and induced to feel along the edges"

(p. 18), while in the painterly style "seeing in masses takes place where the attention withdraws from the edges" (p. 18). As a result, the linear concentrates on individual objects, while the painterly eye sees objects with indistinct boundaries merging into a unified whole.

Thus, movement and stasis result from the treatment of line and mass. Stasis results when the fixed, solid lines and surfaces are stressed and the lights and shadows are congruent with forms. In contrast to linear stasis, the painterly creates movement as light "plays" over rough surfaces and indistinct masses in incongruent shapes--"the picture is dominated by lights and shadows, not exactly indeterminate, yet without stress on the boundaries" (p. 19).

Furthermore, incorporeal space is created when line and mass are indistinct. Where the linear style focuses on "the solid figure," "the enduring form," and "the thing in itself" (p. 27), the painterly style loses interest in isolated figures and concerns itself with "the total picture," which includes the spaces between indistinct objects (p. 20). Due to its interest in "changing appearance," "the form in function," and "the thing in its relations," painterly "sensation now penetrates beyond the solid object into the realm of the immaterial. The painterly style alone knows a beauty of the incorporeal" (p. 27). Thus, the painterly points beyond the corporeal to the incorporeal world: "it is obvious that here the immaterial

and incorporeal must mean as much as concrete objects" (p. 20).

This linear style sounds surprisingly like that of pre-Wordsworthian landscape poetry. For instance, Milton's light-dark imagery in L'Allegro and Il Penseroso illustrates Woelfflin's linear with respect to mass, line, light, and stasis. If we compare a passage of Milton's Il Penseroso with a similar one from Wordsworth's An Evening Walk, we notice that each poet has a different way of seeing--Milton "sees" with the mind in clear-cut, outlined masses, while Wordsworth perceives impressionistically with the eye so that his edges interweave and his objects merge. In Milton's passage the objects--because they are mental images, as "Il Penseroso" suggests--are concepts with complete, distinct surfaces and outlines, conforming to Woelfflin's linear style:

> And when the Sun begins to fling
> His flaring beams, me Goddes bring
> To archéd walks of twilight groves,
> And shadows brown that Sylvan loves,
> Of Pine, or momumental Oake,
> Where the rude Ax with heavéd stroke,
> Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt
> Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
> There in close covert by som brook,
> Hide me from Day's garish eie.
>
> (ll. 131-141)

As an external observer, Milton's narrator pictures "the archéd walks of twilight groves" in a neatly curved line. He names the individual trees--"Of Pine, or monumental Oak"--duly separated by a comma, thus creating separate objects with correspondingly separate edges. In

addition, the sharp separation of the sun's "flaring beams," above, and the groves' "shadows brown," below, creates a static image.

On the other hand, in Wordsworth's passage--in which he describes what he sees as he moves through the landscape on an evening walk--objects are not distinct but merge into each other:

> --Then Quiet led me up the huddling rill,
> Bright'ning with water-breaks the sombrous gill;
> To where, while thick above the branches close,
> In dark-brown basin its wild waves repose,
> Inverted shrubs, and moss of darkest green,
> Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-weeds between;
> Save that, atop, the subtle sunbeams shine,
> On wither'd briars that o'er the craggs recline;
> Sole light admitted here, a small cascade,
> Illumes with sparkling foam the twilight shade.
> (ll. 71-80)

In this description, Wordsworth is within the scene, beneath the trees, not an observer from without. Unlike the neatly "arched walks" of Milton's "twilight groves," the edges of Wordsworth's trees are indistinct as their "branches close" "thick" over his head. In other words, despite Wordsworth's epithets and heroic couplets, Wordsworth's trees are known only by their thickly closing branches above the narrator's head, and thus they are not seen as separate, distinct masses. Light enters the darkness formed by the closed branches in three ways: from "bright'ning" "water-breaks" within the dark area itself, from pool reflections of sunlit "briars" at the cascade's top--again within the dark area--and from the waterfall's

"sparkling foam," which interrupts the darkness. Thus, there is no separation of light area and dark area--the sun above and the shade below the trees--as there is in Milton's description. Instead, light and dark merge, as do the edges of the branches. This merging of objects and this back-and-forth attention to light and shade creates movement. Movement is also suggested by vibrating light "bright'ning" and "sparkling" through the "twilight shade." Thus, Wordsworth's moving action contrasts with Milton's static image.

Thus, light, shade, outline, mass, object relationships, and movement differ between Milton's linear and Wordsworth's picturesque landscapes: Milton's objects remain separate, while Wordsworth's objects run together into an organic whole. John Dixon Hunt corroborates this linearity when he calls Milton's landscape a "landscape of the spirit" (Figure p. 56) and Pope's landscape intellectual and non-visual:

> Pope's Windsor Forest, and before it Denham's Cooper's Hill, were concerned little with the visual or the topographical. The energies of Pope's poem are literary ('non iniussa cano'), its metaphoric allusions to mythology, though they share the same iconography as Claude or an Italian Renaissance garden, are determinedly verbal, and the vision of Windsor is at some distinct remove from any sight or thought of its actual scenery ("I roam from Shade to shade,/By God-like Poets Venerable made"). The poem may be the result of knowing Windsor (Pope, of course, did), but what it offered is neither an account of looking nor in any direct fashion a product of looking: the mental territory is the poet's landscape. . . . 'Fruitful Fields,' 'tufted Trees' and 'teaming Grain' establish the scenery in literary memories

> of Milton and Virgil rather than 'out there' where Pope passed his childhood. (p. 225)

As an illustration of Pope's intellectual landscape, Hunt uses the following excerpt from Eloisa to Abelard:

> But o'er the twilight groves and dusky caves,
> Long-sounding isles, intermingled groves,
> Black Melancholy sits, and round her throws
> A death-like silence, and a dread repose:
> Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
> Shades ev'ry flow'r, and darkens ev'ry green,
> Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
> And breathes a browner horror on the woods.
> (ll. 163-170)

Here again, despite the adjective "intermingled," we see objects separated by commas and total separation of light from shade. Hunt refers to Pope's light/dark contrast, not as the chiaroscuro of painting, but as a function of concordia discors:

> The force of his images is general and abstract: the idea of 'waving Groves a chequer'd Scene display' is provided for its hint of concordia discors and a sense thereby of Pope's literary obligations to Denham, not for any allusion to some painted chiaroscuro of landscape. (p. 225)

Hunt also points out the intellectual--and hence linear--descriptions of other poets, such as Thomson, Gray, and Collins. For example, in Thomson's "Autumn" (1730 ed.), Melancholy is invited to bear the poet

> to vast embowering shades,
> To twilight groves, and visionary vales,
> To weeping grottoes, and prophetic glooms.

Here again is the list of separate objects, separated by commas, described without any merged edges.

Before Wordsworth, other poets, such as Thomson, Akenside, and Collins, had used the verbals "gleam" and "glitter." According to Elizabeth Manwaring, these eighteenth-century glimmers and gleams are imitations of seventeenth-century landscape painters, such as Rubens and Claude.[6] Gilpin, Price, and Knight also looked to these seventeenth-century painters in formulating their picturesque theories. Furthermore, Thomson, Akenside, and Collins do not provide a model for Wordsworth's movement of light and shadow; it is the movement, as codified by Gilpin, Price, and Knight, which accounts for the difference between Wordsworth's picturesque descriptions and those of his predecessors. (See Chapter 7 for further treatment of Thomson.)

Therefore, I claim that the theories of Gilpin, Price, and Knight, and not the poetry of Thomson, Akenside, and Collins, account for Wordsworth's revolutionary description. Wordsworth's picturesque description illustrates a poetic revolt against the conventional linear, intellectual, tactile style in favor of a painterly, visual style. Wordsworth's visual style does not preclude a connection with the mind, however. Intellectual concerns re-enter Wordsworth's visual picture through the associative picturesque.

Woelfflin and the Picturesque of Gilpin, Price, and Knight

Gilpin, Price, and Knight anticipate Woelfflin's painterly principles. For instance, where Woelfflin finds the beginnings of painterly vision in the high renaissance--as "the tactile picture [became] the visual picture" (Principles, p. 21)--Knight finds the beginnings of the picturesque style in Georgione: "[it] was invented by Giorgione about the beginning, and perfected by Titian about the middle of the sixteenth century: soon after which the word made its first appearance in the Italian, and, I believe, in any language" (An Analytical Inquiry, 2nd ed., pp. 150-151). Price, too, finds the origin of the picturesque in "modern" as opposed to "ancient art" (Essays, I, xii). Appropriately, Woelfflin cites as painterly examples many of the same painters that Gilpin, Price, and Knight, (and Reynolds) cite as picturesque examples: Rembrandt, Rubens, Titian and the Venetian school, and the Dutch painters--Teniers, Jan Steen, and Ostade.

More importantly, however, Woelfflin's concept of picturesque mass, line, and lighting is practically identical to that of Gilpin, Price, and Knight.[7] For instance, when we look at Gilpin's Three Essays, we find Woelfflin's painterly broken line, massing of light and shade, and high-lighting:

> From rough objects also [the painter] seeks the effect of light and shade, which they are as well disposed to produce, as they are the beauty of composition. One uniform light, or one uniform shade produces no effect. It is the various surfaces of objects, sometimes turning to the light in one way, and sometimes in another, that give the painter his choice of opportunities in massing, and graduating both his lights, and shadows.--The richness also of the light depends on the breaks, and little recesses, which it finds on the surfaces of bodies. What the painter calls richness on a surface, is only a variety of little parts; on which the light shining, shews all it's small inequalities, and roughnesses; and in the painter's language, inriches it.---The beauty also of catching lights arises from the roughness of objects. What the painter calls a catching light is a strong touch of light on some prominent part of a surface, while the rest is in shadow. A smooth surface has no such prominences. (p. 20)

Gilpin's "breaks, and little recesses, which [light] finds on the surfaces of bodies" corresponds to Woelfflin's play of light across uneven forms, as does Gilpin's "strong touch of light on some prominent part of a surface." (Movement and space will be dealt with separately at the end of this section.)

Similarly, when we examine Price's discussion of picturesque landscape gardening and painting, we find Woelfflin's painterly characteristics of irregular line, massing of light and shade, reflections from intricate forms, and atmospheric light. For example, Woelfflin's disintegrating line corresponds to Price's roughness. Price's roughness derives from Edmund Burke. Just as, for Burke, the origin of beauty is to be sought in smooth objects and curving lines, so, for Price, the origin of the picturesque is in roughness, sudden variation, and

irregularity:

> Beauty and picturesqueness are indeed evidently founded on very opposite qualities; the one on smoothness, the other on roughness; the one on gradual, the other on sudden variation; the one on ideas of youth and freshness, the other on those of age, and even of decay. (Essays, I, 68-69)

And

> I am therefore persuaded, that the two opposite qualities of roughness,and of sudden variation, joined to that of irregularity, are the most efficient causes of the picturesque. (I, 50-51)

Price, following Gilpin, also anticipates Woelfflin's painterly masses: "I may add also [for the improver], what is so very essential to the painter, though at first sight it seems hardly within the province of the improver--breadth and effect of light and shade" (I, 13-14). By breadth, Price means those lights and shadows "which are broad and continued": "Every person of the least observation, must have remarked how broad the lights and shadows are on a fine evening in nature, or (what is almost the same thing) in a picture of Claude" (I, 148). Price then illustrates how these broad lights and shadows occur in nature:

> If, for instance, we suppose a continued sweep of hills, either entirely wooded, or entirely bare, to be under the influence of a low cloudless sun--whatever parts are exposed to that sun, will have one broad light upon them; whatever are hid from it, one broad shade. If again we suppose the wood to have been thinned in such a manner, as to have left masses, groups and single trees, so disposed as to present a pleasing and connected whole, though with detached parts; or the bare

> hills to have been planted in the same style--the variety of light and shadow will be greatly increased, and the general breadth still be preserved. (I, 149)

Price's counterpart to Woelfflin's play of painterly light over forms is "brilliance," and his counterpart to Woelfflin's forms dissolving in twilight is "splendour." For Price, "brilliance" is reflected light and "splendour" is atmospheric light. Since brilliance is light reflected from rough and varied surfaces, brilliance is produced by roughness and sudden variation. Price defines roughness as "a sharp, pointed, angular" surface which causes light to reflect from it as if from a diamond or "brilliant," hence the term "brilliance." This "brilliance" produces an "irritating" yet pleasurable effect on the viewer: it is "the source of our most active and lively pleasures" (I, 126-127). Therefore, the physiological effect of irritation is analogous to--and somewhere between--Burkean tension and relaxation:

> But here likewise roughness, in which term I mean to include whateer is sharp, pointed, angular, or in any way contrary to smoothness, produces the effect I have ascribed to it: for when smooth polished surfaces are cut into sharp angles, the irritation is infinitely encreased. A table diamond, for instance, like other highly polished objects, has a considerable degree of stimulus; but it is only when cut into a number of sharp points and angles, that it acquires the distinguished title of a brilliant. Light itself, when broken in its passage, though the quantity be diminished, is rendered more irritating; we can bear the full uninterrupted splendour of the setting sun, nay can gaze on the orb itself with little uneasiness; but when its rays are broken by passing through a thin screen of leaves and

> branches, no eye is proof against the irritation. (I, 117-118)

For Price as for Woelfflin, Rubens is an important picturesque example. Where Woelfflin stresses Rubens' "energy of movement" however (Principles, pp. 6, 8), Price stresses his "flicker" of light as an example of brilliance:

> In point of brilliancy, of extreme splendour of light no pictures can stand in competition with those of Rubens: sometimes those lights are almost unmixed with shade; at other times they burst from dark shadows, they glance on the different parts of the picture, and produce that flicker (as it sometimes is called) so captivating to the eye under his management. (Essays, I, 128-129)

Rembrandt is also an important picturesque example for Woelfflin and Price. Woelfflin again stresses Rembrandt's "painterly movement" (Principles, p. 27), whereas for Price, Rembrandt illustrates the picturesque flicker of light:

> [Rembrandt's famous picture in the Stadthaus at Amsterdam] is the most surprising instance I ever saw of the effect of that rough manner of pencilling, in producing what most nearly approaches to the glitter and to the irritation which is caused by real light. (Essays, I, 133-134)

Since Price's "splendour" is atmospheric light--a milder and more equal "diffusion" of brilliance--it is thus a broad category which includes Woelfflin's form-dissolving twilight. In contrast to Rubens' "general brilliancy and dazzling effects" (I, 132), Claude's "splendour" is a "more mild diffusion of light" (I, 132) and a "more mild and equal sunshine":

> The pictures of Claude are brilliant in a high degree; but that brilliancy is so diffused over the whole of them, so happily balanced, so mellowed and subdued by the almost visible atmosphere which pervades every part, and unites all together, that nothing in particular catches the eye; the whole is splendour, the whole is repose; every thing lighted up, every thing in sweetest harmony. (I, 130)

Claude's "splendour," however, is also a type of massing or broadness of light and shadow:

> The various effects in painting which have been discussed in the last chapter, naturally lead me to that great principle of the art, breadth of light and shadow. What is called breadth, seems to bear nearly the same relation to light and shadow, as smoothness does to material objects; for as a greater degree of irritation arises from uneven surfaces, and from those most of all which are broken into little inequalities, so all lights and shadows which are interrupted and scattered, are infinitely more irritating than those which are broad and continued. Every person of the least observation, must have remarked how broad the lights and shadows are on a fine evening in nature, or (what is almost the same thing) in a picture of Claude. (I, 147-148)

Thus, splendour, as well as broad lights and shadows, is less irritating than brilliance and thus less picturesque.

Price anticipates Woelfflin's non-corporeal space with his concept of curiosity. This curiosity is produced by indistinct line--in "scenes where the lines and forms are broken and abrupt"--and is kept "alive and unsatisfied" by "deep coves, and hollows":

> [Yet] the most constant and manifest stimulus which rough and abrupt objects produce in picturesque scenery, is that of curiosity. This will clearly appear, if we consider in how much

> greater a degree all that most excites and nourishes curiosity abounds in scenes where the lines and forms are broken and abrupt, than in those where they are smooth and flowing. . . . All such deep coves, and hollows, as are usually found in this style of scenery, invite the eye to penetrate into their recesses, yet keep its curiosity alive and unsatisfied; whereas in the other, the light and shadow has the same uniform, unbroken character as the ground itself. (I, 122-123)

In the parallel between Price's picturesque and Burke's sublime and beautiful, curiosity belongs somewhere between the physiological effects of tension and relaxation; curiosity's psychological effects lie between Burke's fear and love. This curiosity is a milder form of Burke's sublime emotion of "astonishment," yet a stronger emotion than Burke's beautiful emotion of "love": "In pursuing the same train of ideas, I may add, that the effect of the picturesque is curiosity; an effect, which though less splendid and powerful, has a more general influence: in comparison with the astonishment and tension of the sublime" (I, 88).

When we come to Knight, we discover that Knight anticipates Sypher's distinction between the associational and visual picturesque:

> But, nevertheless, the mere sensual pleasures of vision, which are at present exclusively the subject of inquiry, depend entirely on the primary impressions, unimproved and undisguised by the intermixture of other notions and ideas, acquired by means of the other senses: for as they consist in different modes and degrees of organic irritation, they are of a totally distinct class from those which result from the operations of mind. (An Analytical Inquiry, 2nd ed. p. 94)

Like Woelfflin's painterly, therefore, Knight's visual picturesque is "that merely visible beauty, abstracted from all mental sympathies or intellectual fitness, which is at present the subject of inquiry." (1st ed. p. 69)

Knight also anticipates Woelfflin's painterly and linear with his distinction in Renaissance painting between "what the eye saw" and "what the mind knew":

> It was soon, however, discovered that [exact imitation] was rather copying what the mind knew to be, from the concurrent testimony of another sense, than what the eye saw; and that, even had it been practicable to the utmost extent and variety of nature, it would not have been a true representation of the visible appearance of things: for the eye, when at a sufficient distance to comprehend the whole of a human figure, a tree, or a building, within the field of vision, sees parts so comparatively minute as the hair, the leaves, and the stones or bricks, in masses, and not individually. (2nd ed. p. 149)

Hipple has also noticed Woelfflin's painterly style in the above reference: "In this remarkable passage Knight distinguishes linear and painterly, clear and unclear, in the very manner of Woelfflin" (<u>The Beautiful</u>, p. 261).

Knight thus anticipates Woelfflin's painterly broken line and masses of light and shade:

> [This visual picturesque] consists, according to the principles which I have endeavoured to establish, in harmonious, but yet brilliant and contrasted combinations of light, shade, and colour; blended, but not confused; and broken but not cut, into masses: and it is not peculiarly in straight or curve, taper or spiral, long or short, little or great objects, that we are to seek for these; but in such as display to the eye intricacy

of parts and variety of tint and surface. (An Analytical Inquiry, 1st ed., p. 69)

Following Gilpin and Price on massing, Knight writes, "the objects and compositions of objects which we properly call picturesque" are produced by "massing," which means comprehending the parts of a whole, such as hair, leaves, stones and rocks "in masses, and not individually" (2nd ed., pp. 149-150). This massing "gave breadth to the lights and shadows, mellowed them into each other, and enabled the artist to break and blend them together. . . ." Knight then illustrates massing with Venetian, Lombard, Flemish, and Dutch painters, who, "instead of making their lines more distinct, and keeping their tints more separate, than the visible appearance of the objects warranted . . . , blended them and melted them together with a playful and airy kind of lightness, and a loose and sketchy indistinctness not observable in the reality" (2nd ed., p. 150).

Following Price, Knight deals also with the concepts of brilliance and splendour. Like Price, Knight finds that roughness, not smoothness, produces this brilliance: the "visible beauty [in brilliant objects] does not consist in their smoothness" (1st ed., p. 67). Unlike Price, however, Knight dislikes the harshness of outdoor brilliance and considers it pleasing only when it is subdued in painting, where "the sharpness and brilliancy of those angular reflections" are "brought into unison with the rest" of the composition and thus cleansed of their "harsh and dazzling"

effects (1st ed., 66-67). However, Knight lauds twilight brilliance--Price's splendour--whose soft light, in the form of candles, the moon, or twilight, mellows the harshness of reflections:

> In the reality, also, much will depend upon the kind and degree of light to which objects are exposed; whence we can bear, and even require, much more brilliance and opposition of colour in the insides than on the outsides of buildings; and more in articles, that are to be seen by candle-light, than in those which are to be exposed to day-light; for candle-light, moon-light, and twilight melt every thing into one mild hue; through the harmonising medium of which, things the most offensively glittering, gaudy, and harsh become beautifully rich, splendid, and mellow. (2nd ed., 97-98)

As examples of brilliance Knight uses some of the same painters as Price: "This artifice [of brilliance] is manifest in most of the pictures painted for effect by the great Venetian and Flemish masters; particularly Titian and Rembrandt" (1st ed., p. 67).

Gilpin and Knight deal indirectly with motion in their theories, while Price deals with it directly. Gilpin suggests picturesque movement when he describes lights and shadows reflected from "various surfaces of objects, sometimes turning to the light in one way, and sometimes in another." He contrasts this moving light to "one uniform light," which suggests stasis. In a note, Gilpin further indicates that motion is the effect of roughness: "In describing Venus, Vergil probably thought hair, when <u>flowing in the wind</u>, both beautiful, and picturesque, from it's

[sic] undulating form, and varied tints; and from a kind of life, which it assumes in motion [italics mine] (Three Essays, p. 9).

Similarly, Knight suggests motion when he describes the effects of massing, as artists "blended and melted [tints and lines] together with a playful and airy kind of lightness, and a sort of loose and sketchy indistinctness not observable in the reality" [italics mine] (An Analytical Inquiry, 2nd ed., p. 150). This irregularity produces a "play of light": "[picturesque] painters delight not only in irregular trees, but irregular buildings, and buildings irregularly mixed with trees; which afford more varieties of tint, and a more luxuriant play of light and shadow, than any regular combination of parts can produce" (2nd ed., p. 86). The result is a "free and sketchy style of imitation": "Objects, that are not circumscribed by straight, or very determinate outlines, but of which the forms are loose and flowing, are peculiarly well adapted to this free and sketchy style of imitation; and are, therefore, properly to be considered as picturesque" (2nd ed., p. 183).

Price, however, addresses movement directly when he discusses roughness. Price writes that roughness "conveys that [idea] of irritation, but at the same time of animation, spirit, and variety" (Essays, I, 115). Price therefore prefers movement-producing brilliance to the "repose" produced by broad masses of light and shade:

> The first effect of mere breadth of light and shadow is to the eye, what that of mere harmony of sounds is to the ear; both produce a pleasing repose, a calm sober delight, which, if not relieved by something less uniform, soon sinks into distaste and weariness, for repose and sleep, which are often used as synonymous terms, are always nearly allied. (I, 155)

In order to prevent repose from causing spectator "weariness," however, Price advises that breadth of light and shade should be mixed with brilliant lights and sharply contrasting shades which irritate the spectator's eye:

> There is, however, no small difficulty in uniting breadth, with the detail, the splendid variety, and marked character of nature. Claude is admirable in this, as in almost every other respect: with the greatest accuracy of detail, and truth of character, his pictures have the breadth of the simplest washed drawing, or aquatinta print, where little else is expressed, or intended. In a strong light, they are full of interesting and entertaining particulars; and as twilight comes on, I have often observed in them the same gradual fading of the glimmering landscape, as in real nature.

Thus, atmospheric splendour should be combined with reflected brilliance for an optimum picturesque effect, as with Claude and the following painters:

> This art of preserving breadth with detail and brilliancy, has been studied with great success by Teniers, Jan Steen, and many of the Dutch masters. Ostade's pictures and etchings are among the happiest examples of it; but above all others, the works of that scarce and wonderful master, Gerard Dow. (I, 155-157)

As mentioned above, painterly form, movement and light create non-corporeal space. Price deals with this space,

while Knight enlarges instead upon imagination and association. Gilpin merely writes of the mind's finding in nature "the great origin of all beauty" (Three Essays, p. 48).

Price's discussion of curiosity reveals incorporeal space: "All such deep coves, and hollows, as are usually found in this style of scenery invite the eye to penetrate into their recesses, yet keep its curiosity alive and unsatisfied (Three Essays, I, 122-123). Price again suggests this space when he discusses his purpose for formulating a picturesque theory: "I have been desirous of opening new sources of innocent, and easily attained pleasures" (I, xi). These pleasures come from looking at scenery with a painter's eye: "Quam multa vident pictores in umbris et in eminentia quae nos non videmus" [How many things painters see in shadows and in things which emerge from them which we do not see.] Thus, Price's motto indicates his delight in the incorporeal world emerging from the spaces between corporeal objects:

> Were it, indeed, possible that, a painter of great and general excellence could at once bestow on such a man,--not his power of imitating, but of distinguishing and feeling the effects and combinations of form, colour, and light and shadow,--it would hardly be too much to assert that a new appearance of things, a new world would suddenly be opened to him; and the bestower might preface the miraculous gift, with the words in which Venus addresses her son, when she removes the mortal film from his eyes.
>
> Aspice, namque omnem quae nunc obducta tuenti

> Mortalis hebetat visus tibi, et humida circum
> Caligat, nubem eripiam. (I, xiv-xvi)

These lines from Aeneid II, 604-606 describe Venus allowing Aeneas to see the gods aiding in the destruction of Troy and thus suggest by analogy that the eye of the painter sees beyond the material world. According to Price, this new world which only a painter sees is actually brought into existence for others by the painter:

> Si Venerem Cous nunquam posuisset Appeles
> Mersa subaequores illa lateret aquis.
> (I, 40)

[If Appeles of Cos had never fashioned Venus, she would still lie submerged beneath the waters.] Thus, for Price, the painter sees or imaginatively creates what the non-painter cannot see. In any case, the picturesque painter shows us in the world of objects a dimension that we otherwise would not see.

In summary, Gilpin, Price, and Knight forged visual picturesque elements from Renaissance and Baroque painting into a picturesque theory, which Woelfflin has helped us to understand. A summary of these picturesque characteristics includes the following: indistinct line, massing, intricate forms, the play of light and shadow over forms, reflected light from uneven surfaces, the dissolving of forms in twilight, atmospheric light, the illusion of movement, and the sense of incorporeal space.

Wordsworth and Picturesque Criticism

The picturesque status of Wordsworth's poetry has been the subject of much scholarly debate. In language which corresponds to the "picturesque" and the "painterly," scholars refer to Wordsworth's early and later works in terms of "dominance of the eye" and "blendings." Scholars thus agree that Wordsworth freed himself from the picturesque "dominance of the eye" before he published Lyrical Ballads (1798).[8] By "dominance of the eye" Geoffrey Hartman (1964) refers to Wordsworth's early contrasts, as opposed to his later "blendings," of mind and the external world (Wordsworth's Poetry, pp. 123, 362). The scholars, however, disagree as to when this liberation took place. To Hartman, Descriptive Sketches' "milder vistas" merely anticipate or imply the possibility of the natural blendings of Wordsworth's later poetry (p. 123). To Paul Sheats (1973), on the other hand, Descriptive Sketches' sunset scene illustrates the transition from antithesis to integration of man and nature: "[the sunset scene] transcends the balanced antitheses of light and shade praised by the proponents of the picturesque" (The Making of Wordsworth's Poetry, p. 60). In An Evening Walk, says Sheats, Wordsworth had not yet made this transition and was still "clarifying the distinction between subject and object" (p. 53). Jonathan Ramsey (1978) agrees that Descriptive Sketches "significantly transmutes the picturesque traditions which heavily influenced Wordsworth's

first descriptions of man and nature" ("Seeing and Perceiving," p. 32). Taking the opposite tack, Stephen J. Spector writes that in Descriptive Sketches Wordsworth was "fully committed to the picturesque mode" even though "he has put the picturesque to his own personal purposes" ("Wordsworth's Mirror Imagery," pp. 92-93). Spector then goes on to argue that Wordsworth continued to use the picturesque in his later poetry.

I agree that a change in Wordsworth's picturesque description occurred in Descriptive Sketches, but I disagree with the notion that he completely freed himself, thereafter, from picturesque principles. It is true, as Russell Noyes puts it, that Wordsworth "rather scornfully defines 'picturesque' in his Guide to the Lakes (1844) as 'a fad for relishing the select parts of natural scenery.'"[9] It is true, too, that The Prelude XII criticizes the poet's earlier habit of comparing

> scene with scene
> Bent overmuch on Superficial things,
> Pampering myself with meagre novelties
> Of colour and proportion.
>
> (11.15-18)

But Wordsworth's practice, I contend, is not always in line with such precepts.

In the context of Woelfflin's dictum that the "picturesque" frequently develops into the "higher forms of painterly taste," I intend to show that Wordsworth's picturesque landscape descriptions developed from an

objective "picturesque" viewpoint to a subjective "painterly" viewpoint. To use Woelfflin's terminology, Wordsworth moved from an objective malerisch to a subjective malerisch style (Principles, p. 27). I also intend to show that eighteenth-century visual picturesque theory--as formulated for painting and landscape gardening by Gilpin, Price, and Knight and put into poetic form in Gilpin's "On Landscape Painting"--provided Wordsworth with the aesthetic foundation for this development. I intend to do this by examining Wordsworth's poetry for visual picturesque principles of light, movement, and space. Such principles will then be compared with corresponding principles in Gilpin Price, and Knight.

Wordsworth's style began with Gilpin's massing of light and shade: Gilpin's "catching lights" and massing of light and shade are frequent in the early Wordsworth of 1793 and 1800. However, even though he often follows Gilpin's picturesque formula for predominance of shade, Wordsworth begins to play with this formula by increasing the proportion of light in both An Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches, until in some scenes he almost eliminates words designating shade altogether. In 1800 Wordsworth seems to react to the picturesque formula by decreasing the quantity of words designating both light and shade. In 1802-09 Wordsworth almost eliminates Gilpin's massing and spotlighting and concentrates on the brilliancy of flickering light and atmospheric splendour--put forward by

Price in 1794 and by Knight in 1805.[10] During this period Wordsworth uses brilliance as well as splendour to represent Nature's metaphysical communication to the poet. From 1815 Wordsworth uses picturesque light--massing, brilliance, and splendour--as a symbol for the transcendent absolute.

Wordsworth also follows Gilpin's poetic practice--from "Landscape Painting"--of imparting motion to landscape elements, especially to light and shade. However, his motion, even in 1793, is gentler than Gilpin's. This motion continues to become even gentler in the 1800 poems until it merges into an overall movement of the landscape, whose parts are relatively calm.

In 1800 Wordsworth also adds a non-empirical presence to picturesque space. The narrator believes this non-empirical presence and the space it occupies to be superior to the empirical objects it surrounds. In 1802-09 Wordsworth temporarily loses confidence in the non-empirical presence. However, he recovers this confidence in <u>The Prelude</u>. After 1815 Wordsworth's lighting--and the non-empirical presence it represents--takes on an increasingly subjective, metaphysical character.

Finally, the <u>ut pictura poesis</u> dictum, so frequently invoked in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century aesthetics, can be used to find similarities between Wordsworth's poems and contemporary paintings. One such parallel can be found between Wordsworth's poetry and Constable's paintings. Critics, such as Russell Noyes (1968), Kenneth Clark (1949),

and Michael Rosenthal (1983), have called attention to the similarities between Wordsworth and Constable.[11] These similarities include the painterly style of moving lights and shadows, dynamic movement--not stasis--and the personification of Nature. Corresponding to the brilliance of Titian, Rubens, and Rembrandt, Constable's "snow" is as striking as Wordsworth's "gleams."

Notes

[1]Christopher Hussey, The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1967), p. 4. Walter John Hipple, Jr., The Beautiful, The Sublime, The Picturesque In Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory (Carbondale: The Southern Illinois University Press, 1957), p. 261. Wylie Sypher, Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 89.

[2]William Gilpin, Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; On Picturesque Travel; and On Sketching Landscape; To Which Is Added a Poem, On Landscape Painting (London: R. Blamire, 1792), p. 20. Excerpts from On Landscape Painting are referenced by line. Uvedale Price, Essays on the Picturesque, As Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful, and on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape, (London: J. Mawman, 1810), I, 147-150. [First published in 1794.] Richard Payne Knight, An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste, 1st ed. (London, 1805), pp. 149-150. Several quotes are also taken from the 2nd ed. (1805) and are so referenced.

[3]John Dixon Hunt, The Figure in the Landscape; Poetry, Painting, and Gardening during the Eighteenth Century (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 242.

[4]Heinrich Woelfflin, Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Das Problem der Stilentwicklung in der neueren Kunst, dritte Auflage (Muenchen: Hugo Bruckmann, Verlag, 1918). The English translation by M. D. Hottinger is titled Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1950), pp. 14-15. [The Hottinger translation was originally published in 1932 by G. Bell and Sons, Ltd.]

[5]When discussing association, however, the adjectives subjective and objective are used in a broader sense than when used to distinguish the perceptive difference between "picturesque" and "painterly."

[6]Elizabeth Manwaring, Italian Landscape in Eighteenth Century England: A Study Chiefly of Claude Lorrain and Salvator Rosa on English Taste, 1700-1800 (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1965). [First published in 1925.]

[7]Woelfflin's "painterly" and "linear" correspond also to Sir Joshua Reynolds' "picturesque" and "grand." Referring to the picturesque as "the art of fascinating the eye by splendid colouring, and artificial combinations," Reynolds adds, "variety of tints and forms is picturesque" and contrasts with grandeur: "but it must be remembred, on the other hand, that the reverse of this--(Uniformity of colour, and a long continuation of line,) produces grandeur" (quoted in Gilpin's Three Essays, p. 35). By "uniformity of color" Reynolds means "Unmixed colours, the distinct blues, reds, and yellows" (according to Price, Essays, I, 140). Reynolds' "variety of tints and forms" thus corresponds to Woelfflin's "painterly," while Reynolds' "uniformity of color" and "long continuation of line" correspond to Woelfflin's "linear."

[8]Geoffrey H. Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787-1814 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), note 28, p. 362. Paul D. Sheats, The Making of Wordsworth's Poetry, 1685-1798 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 60. Stephen J. Spector, "Wordsworth's Mirror Imagery and the Picturesque Tradition," ELH, 44 (1977), 92-93. Jonathan Ramsey, "Seeing and Perceiving in Wordsworth's An Evening Walk," Modern Language Quarterly, 36 (1975), 377.

[9]Russell Noyes, Wordsworth and the Art of Landscape (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), p. 161.

[10]Throughout this dissertation, "splendour," like "brilliance," is a term; therefore, I have retained its British spelling.

[11]Noyes, pp. 64-90. In Chapter 2 under the heading "Constable and Wordsworth"; Kenneth Clark, Landscape into Art (New York: Harper [and] Rowe, Publishers, 1979), pp. 151-152 [First published in 1949]; Michael Rosenthal, Constable: The Painter and His Landscape (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983, p. 167.

CHAPTER 2
THE NATURE OF GILPIN'S INFLUENCE ON WORDSWORTH: AN EVENING WALK AND DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

Massing, Indistinct Line, and Light

In this chapter I shall reassess both Descriptive Sketches and An Evening Walk (1793) against my own understanding of William Gilpin. By way of adding to what has been said of Wordsworth's early work, I shall examine these two poems in the context of Gilpin's "On Landscape Painting" (1792).[1]

I intend to show that Wordsworth and Gilpin used a visual picturesque style instead of the official linear style, both in painting and in poetry. Gilpin inherited this picturesque style from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century landscape paintings, which he used to formulate his picturesque principle: "let shade predominate."[2] Even though he formulated this principle for painters, Gilpin in his poem "On Landscape Painting" tried to make sound echo sense by applying his principle to poetry. As I will show, Wordsworth's landscape descriptions suggest that he, too, applied Gilpin's principle to his poetry. As artists frequently do, however, he sometimes followed the formula and he sometimes reversed the

formula--increasing light and decreasing shade in some scenes until he almost completely eliminated shade. Furthermore, Wordsworth's descriptions contain moving lights and moving objects similar to those of Gilpin. Relative to Gilpin, however, Wordsworth's motion is gentler.

In his poem "On Landscape Painting" Gilpin explains the use of picturesque massing, indistinct line, light, and motion. His synonym for massing--"gradation"--illustrates the indistinct boundaries with which the painterly deviates from the linear: He defines "gradation" as a mass of light gradually moving into a mass of shade with indistinct boundaries, not a sharp dividing line, between them. He explains his drawing of "gradation" (see Appendix) in the following supplement to the poem:

> When we merely take the lines of a landscape from nature; and inlighten it (as we must often do) from our own taste, and judgment, the massing of the light must be well attended to, as one of the great sources of beauty. It must not be scattered in spots; but must be brought more together, as on the rocky side of the hill in the second print: and yet it must graduate also in different parts; so as not to appear affected. (Three Essays, pp. i, ii after p. 44)

Gilpin's light and shade picturesquely merge into one other in "Nice gradations." Thus, Gilpin's "gradation" removes distinct outlines and enables forms to merge with their surroundings, anticipating Woelfflin's painterly style.

Gilpin also balances his masses of light and shade for "effect":

> But mere light and shade are not sufficient: something of effect also should be aimed at in the adorned sketch. Mere light and shade propose only the simple illumination of objects. Effect, by balancing large masses of each, gives the whole a greater force. (pp. 75-76)

Gilpin's applies his "nice [picturesque] gradations" to both Burke's beautiful and sublime:

> Thou [Locke], to whom
> Each mode of landscape, beauteous or sublime,
> With every various colour, tint, and light,
> Its nice gradations, and its bold effects,
> Are all familiar, patient hear my song.
> (ll. 17-21)

Gilpin introduces the principal of picturesque light in the first five lines:

> That Art, which gives the practis'd pencil pow'r
> To rival Nature's traces to combine
> In one harmonious whole her scatter'd charms,
> And o'er them fling appropriate force of light,
> I sing.
> (ll. 1-5)

According to Gilpin's formula, however, shade should predominate over light in order to accent it: "let shade predominate, it makes each light/More lucid, yet destroys offensive glare" (ll. 406-407). Therefore, a scene without shade is inferior:

> Thus light diffus'd, debases that effect
> Which shade improves. Behold what glorious scenes
> Arise thro' Nature's works from shade.
> (ll. 414-416)

Gilpin explains this picturesque formula in the "Notes on the Foregoing Poem":

> Let shade predominate. As a general rule, the half-tints should have more extent than the lights; and the shadows should equal both put together. Yet, why a predominancy of shade should please the eye more than a predominancy of light should perhaps be difficult to explain. I can easily conceive, that a balance of light and shade may be founded in some kind of reason; but am at a loss to give a reason for a predominancy of either. The fact however is undoubted; and we must skreen [sic] our ignorance of the principle, as well as we can. (p. 35)

Light introduced into predominating shade can appear as "catching lights": "Catching lights" result from a "strong touch of light on some prominent part of a surface, while the rest is in shadow" (p. 21). These catching lights resemble Woelfflin's "falling sunbeam" which "breaks through the darkness and, apparently wilfully, traces its figures on columns and floor."

Gilpin illustrates his picturesque principle in a series of scenes. A brief catalog will show that these scenes are typical of seventeenth century picturesque landscapes: mountains; a cliff-reflecting lake; forest trees at sunset; a shaded river; the ocean with cliffs, beacon, and ship; clouds and promontories at morning, noon, and evening; a misty lake with cliffs at sunrise; a cliff seen against a storm cloud at sunset; dark background mountains; a high mountain peak in middle ground at morning, noon, and evening; and a river opening into the sea with a cliff, beacon, dark cloud, ruins, and birds. As the

following comparison will show, many of Wordsworth's scenes in An Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches are remarkably similar to those of Gilpin.

In An Evening Walk Wordsworth often follows Gilpin's picturesque formula by emphasizing shade. Sometimes, however, he tries to reverse the formula by increasing light and consequently decreasing shade. For instance, if we compare the river scenes from Gilpin's "On Landscape Painting" and Wordsworth's An Evening Walk, we notice that Gilpin puts only one "sparkle" of light into his shady scene while Wordsworth puts in five. Gilpin:

> Next wander by the river's mazy bank:
> See where it dimpling glides; or briskly where
> Its whirling eddies sparkle around the rock;
> Or where, with headlong rage, it dashes down
> Some fractur'd chasm, till all its fury spent,
> It sinks to sleep, a silent stagnant pool,
> Dark, tho' translucent from the mantling shade.
> (ll. 50-56)

The only light that illumines Gilpin's dark pool--"Dark, tho' translucent from the mantling shade"--comes from the "whirling eddies" which "sparkle around the rock."

Wordsworth's corresponding scene contains more light:

> --Then Quiet led me up the huddling rill,
> Bright'ning with water-breaks the sombrous gill;
> To where, while thick above the branches close,
> In dark-brown basin its wild waves repose,
> Inverted shrubs, and moss of darkest green,
> Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-weeds between
> Save that, atop, the subtle sunbeams shine,
> On wither'd briars that o'er the craggs recline:

> Sole light admitted here, a small cascade,
> Illumes with sparkling foam the twilight shade.
> (ll. 71-80)

In this passage Wordsworth refers to light five times: "bright'ning," "subtle sunbeams shine," "sole light," "illumes," and "sparkling foam."

Nevertheless, even though Wordsworth uses more words for light, he does not reduce the shady atmosphere. Instead, he creates more shade by implication, without using additional shade words. For example, to Gilpin's two shade references--"dark" and "mantling shade'--Wordsworth makes three--"sombrous," "dark brown basin," and "twilight shade." In addition, however, he also implies shade. For example, "thick above the branches close" and "sole light admitted here" imply a predominantly shady space.

Thus, while both Gilpin and Wordsworth depict a predominantly shady atmosphere, Wordsworth uses more words for light and, by implication, for shade. We can begin our comparison by matching Wordsworth's and Gilpin's light and shade: Gilpin's "whirling eddies" which "sparkle round the rock" find their counterpart in Wordsworth's "bright'ning water-breaks," while Gilpin's "stagnant pool,/Dark, tho' translucent from the mantling shade" has its counterpart in Wordsworth's "dark-brown basin," "thick above [which] the branches close." So far, the light and shade in both scenes are comparable.

Further comparison reveals the greater quantity of light and shade in Wordsworth. For instance, Gilpin's waterfall is not enlivened by mention of either light or shade as it ambiguously "dashes down/Some fractur'd chasm," whereas Wordsworth's "small cascade" also "illumes with sparkling foam the twilight shade," "sole light admitted [t]here." Furthermore, Gilpin does not indicate whether his pre-cascade river is in sunlight or in shade, whereas Wordsworth adds a shaft of sunlight reflecting from the rocky summit of the waterfall: "atop, the subtle sunbeams shine,/On wither'd briars that o'er the craggs recline." Again, while Gilpin's "stagnant pool" is merely "translucent," Wordsworth adds reflections to its quiet waters--"Inverted shrubs and moss of darkest green,/Cling from the rocks." Therefore, despite his increase in the proportion of light words to shade words, Wordsworth also increases--consciously or unconsciously--the implication of shade. In other words, while he increased the light, Wordsworth also increased the shadow, thus conforming to the picturesque formula.

Wordsworth can also paint shadow more economically than Gilpin. Both Gilpin's and Wordsworth's lakes reflect masses of shade, but Wordsworth takes fewer lines to depict this shade. Gilpin:

> [N]ext survey
> The distant lake; so seen, a shining spot:

> But when approaching nearer, how it flings
> Its sweeping curves around the shooting cliffs.
> Mark every shade its Proteus shape assumes
> From motion and from rest; and how the forms
> Of tufted woods, and beetling rocks, and tow'rs
> Of ruin'd castles, from the smooth expanse,
> Shade answ'ring shade, inverted meet the eye.
> (ll. 34-42)

Gilpin mentions shade in this description three times, while Wordsworth mentions the word <u>shade</u> in a similar lake description only once:

> Long may ye roam these hermit waves that sleep,
> In birch besprinkl'd cliffs embosm'd deep;
> These fairy holms untrodden, still, and green,
> Whose shades protect the hidden wave serene.
> (ll. 219-222)

Cloud scenes also show that Wordsworth concentrates on light, while Gilpin concentrates on shade. Gilpin:

> [M]ark each floating cloud; its form,
> Its varied colour; and what mass of shade
> It gives the scene below, pregnant with change
> Perpetual, from the morning's purple dawn,
> Till the last glimm'ring ray of russet eve.
> (ll. 68-72)

Gilpin focuses on the "mass of shade," "morning's purple dawn," and the darkness implied by the "last glimm'ring ray of russet eve." Wordsworth, on the other hand, focuses on the light: "the wan noon," the "pale steam around the glaring hill," and the "lights between" the "spotting" "shades." Wordsworth:

> When, in the south, the wan noon brooding still,

> Breath'd a pale steam around the glaring hill,
> And shades of deep embattl'd clouds were seen
> Spotting the northern cliffs with lights between.
> (ll. 53-56)

In another cloud description, Wordsworth merely implies shade:

> While, near the midway cliff, the silver'd kite
> In many a whistling circle wheels her flight;
> Slant wat'ry lights, from parting clouds a-pace,
> Travel along the precipice's base.
> (ll. 89-92)

Instead of describing the cloud shadows, Wordsworth describes shafts of sunlight--"slant wat'ry lights"--moving along the ground. Even though Wordsworth does not use the word for shade in this scene, the reader knows from visual experience that where shafts of sunlight travel across the ground, they alternate with cloud shadows. Thus, Wordsworth focuses on the light between the shadows. To this scene Wordsworth adds even more light with the sunlight-reflecting "silver'd" kite.

One last example will suffice to illustrate Wordsworth's stress on light in contrast to Gilpin's stress on shade. Half of Gilpin's storm-cloud scene features shade and thus illustrates Gilpin's picturesque formula, whereas over half of Wordsworth's counterpart is devoted to light. In this scene Gilpin describes the sunlit cliff, castle, and trees standing out against the dark storm cloud as they catch the horizontal rays of the setting sun:

But would'st thou see the full effect of shade
Well mass'd at eve mark that upheaving cloud,
Which charg'd with all th' artillery of Jove,
In awful darkness, marching from the east,
Ascends; see how it blots the sky, and spreads,
Darker, and darker still, its dusky veil,
Till from the east to west, the cope of heav'n
It curtains closely round. Haply thou stand'st
Expectant of the loud convulsive burst,
When lo! the sun, just sinking in the west,
Pours from th' horizon's verge a splendid ray,
Which tenfold grandeur to the darkness adds.
Far to the east the radiance shoots, just tips
Those tufted groves; but all its splendour pours
On yonder castled cliff, which chiefly owes
Its glory, and supreme effect, to shade.
(ll. 423-438)

As the underlines indicate, over half of Gilpin's scene is devoted to shade. Underlines in the following excerpt indicate that over half of Wordsworth's counterpart features light:

Hung o'er a cloud, above the steep that rears
It's edge all flame, the broad'ning sun appears;
A long blue bar it's aegis orb divides,
And breaks the spreading of it's golden tides;
And now it touches on the purple steep
That flings his shadow on the pictur'd deep.
Cross the calm lakes blue shades the cliffs aspire,
With tow'rs and woods a 'prospect all on fire';
The coves and secret hollows thro' a ray
Of fainter gold a purple gleam betray;
The gilded turf arrays in richer green
Each speck of lawn the broken rocks between;
Deep yellow beams the scatter'd boles illume
Far in the level forest's central gloom;
Waving his hat, the shepherd in the vale
Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale,
That, barking rush 'mid the glittering rocks,
Hunts, where he points, the intercepted flocks;
Where oaks o'er hand the road the radiance shoots
The Druid stones their lighted fane unfold
And all the babbling brooks are liquid gold;
Sunk to a curve the day-star lessens still,

> *Gives one bright glance, and sinks behind the hill.*
>
> (ll. 151-174)

As my italics indicate, Gilpin's description begins with shade and half way through introduces sun. Wordsworth's description, on the other hand, begins and ends with light, while shade alternates with light in the middle of the description.

Comparing these cloud scenes reveals their similarity. The analog of Gilpin's dark, sky-covering storm cloud is Wordsworth's horizon-paralleling "blue bar." Gilpin's cloud covers the sky from the east to just above the western horizon, while Wordsworth's cloud is a bar above the western horizon. Both scenes are described as pictures--Gilpin telling how to paint the scene, Wordsworth referring to the "pictur'd deep." Both poets depict the horizontal rays of the setting sun striking eastern trees, ruins, and cliffs: Gilpin's "tufted groves" and "castled cliff" match Wordsworth's "cliffs" "with tow'rs and woods." Here, however, Wordsworth's reaction to Gilpin begins. Where Gilpin dwells on the light/dark contrast, Wordsworth dwells on listing sunlit objects. A list of words from the above excerpts illustrates Gilpin's shade and Wordsworth's light:

Gilpin	Light	Shadow
	"sun" "pours" "a splendid ray" "Which tenfold grandeur adds" "radiance shoots" "splendour pours"	"shade" "well massed" "awful darkness" "blots the sky" "Darker and darker still" "dusky veil" "curtains" "darkness" "shade" "to the darkness"
Wordsworth	Light	Shadow
	"edge all flame" "broadening sun" "golden tides" "'a prospect all on fire'" "a ray/Of fainter gold" "purple gleam" "gilded turf" "deep yellow beams" "illume" "glittering rocks" "radiance shoots" "lighted fane" "liquid gold" "day star" "bright glance"	"shadow" "blue shades" "gloom"

As the above table shows, Wordsworth uses a much greater proportion of light than shade, whereas Gilpin uses a slightly greater proportion of shade than light. Furthermore, Wordsworth uses a greater quantity of words for light and a smaller quantity of words for shade than Gilpin.

In Descriptive Sketches, Wordsworth further eliminates shadow. As he writes in his note to Descriptive Sketches, he wants to avoid the picturesque by adding light and omitting shade:

> I had once given to these Sketches the title of Picturesque; but the Alps are insulted in applying to them that term. Whoever, in attempting to describe their sublime features should confine himself to the cold rules of painting would give his reader but a very imperfect idea of those emotions which they have the irresistible power of communicating to the most impassive imaginations. The fact is, that controuling influence, which distinguishes the Alps from all other scenery, is derived from images which disdain the pencil. Had I wished to make a picture of this scene I had thrown much less light into it. But I consulted nature and my feelings. The ideas excited by the storm sunset I am here describing owed their sublimity to that deluge of light, or rather of fire, in which nature had wrapped the immense forms around me; any intrusion of shade, by destroying the unity of the impression, had necessarily diminished it's grandeur. (p. 62)

Whereas Burke specified darkness as the principal cause of the sublime, Wordsworth considers the "deluge of light" as the cause of this scene's "sublimity."

In spite of his declaration to violate it, Wordsworth frequently follows Gilpin's predominance-of-shade formula. For instance, in the following scene the emphasis is on shadow as Wordsworth paints lake-reflected cliff shadows contrasting with morning sunlight:

> Or [Silence] stops the solemn mountain-shades to view
> Stretch, o'er their pictur'd mirror, broad and blue,
> Tracking the yellow sun from steep to steep,
> As up th' opposing hills, with tortoise foot, they creep.
> (ll. 102-105)

Here the "broad and blue" shadows lengthen or shorten in vivid contrast with the "yellow sun." To this picturesque

scene Wordsworth adds a town half in light, half in shadow--in contrasting Gilpinesque masses: "Here half a village shines, in gold array'd,/Bright as the moon, half hides itself in shade." The church spire adds its "catching lights" to this contrast: "From the dark sylvan roofs the restless spire,/Inconstant glancing, mounts like springing fire." The horizontal shade/sun contrast is thus balanced by a vertical shade/sun contrast as the church spire catches the light above the "dark sylvan roofs." Wordsworth's penchant for putting in more light is illustrated even in reflections. Here, Wordsworth's lake reflects sunlight as well as shadow--"unshaded, blazing forests throw/Rich golden verdure on the waves below" (ll. 106-111)--in addition to their usual shadows--"[Silence] stops the solemn mountain-shades to view/Stretch, o'er their pictur'd mirror, broad and blue." A final Gilpinesque contrast, however, ends the scene: "Slow glides the sail along th' <u>illumined</u> shore,/And steals into the <u>shade</u> the lazy oar" [italics mine] (ll. 106-113).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, critics consider Wordsworth's sunset storm scene in <u>Descriptive Sketches</u> to be one of total light. However, I claim that Wordsworth's implied darkness--and hence picturesqueness--is just as "visible" to the reader as that in Gilpin's analogous scene. As in Gilpin's prototype, Wordsworth's sun emerges beneath the western edge of the storm cloud to illuminate the cliffs from west to east--the dark storm cloud acting as a

contrasting backdrop:

> 'Tis storm; and hid in mist from hour to hour
> All day the floods a deeper murmur pour,
> And mournful sounds, as of a Spirit lost,
> Pipe wild along the hollow-blustering coast,
> 'Till the Sun walking on his western field
> Shakes from behind the clouds his flashing shield.
> Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
> Glances the fire-clad eagle's wheeling form,
> Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine
> The wood-crown'd cliffs that o'er the lake
> recline;
> Wide o'er the Alps a hundred streams unfold,
> At once to pillars turn'd that flame with gold.
> Behind his sail the peasant strives to shun
> The West that burns like one dilated sun.
> Where in a mighty crucible expire
> The mountains, glowing hot, like coals of fire.
> (ll. 332-347)

Despite Wordsworth's insistence that he avoided the picturesque by omitting shadow, he nevertheless implies shadow in the dark storm cloud. He makes other objects stand out against this dark background: "The fire-clad eagle" seen against "the bosom of the storm" betrays the dark cloud backdrop, since the storm's "bosom" is dark by definition. The peasant's refuge behind his sail, i.e., in his sail's shade, is another implication of shadow. Nevertheless, the deliberate omission of words denoting shadow indicates Wordsworth's attempt to break away from the picturesque formula. Even though he partially succeeded, the picturesque nature of the scene is supplied by the reader, who furnishes his visual experience of dark storm clouds at sunset.

Moreover, in contrast to his frequent imbalance in favor of light, Wordsworth occasionally emphasizes shadow and almost excludes light:

> More pleas'd, my foot the hidden margin roves
> Of Como bosom'd deep in chestnut groves.
> (11.80-81)
>
> To towns, whose shades of no rude sound complain,
> (l. 84)
>
> To flat-roof'd towns, that touch the water's bound,
> Or lurk in woody sunless glens profound,
> Or from the bending rocks obtrusive cling,
> And o'er the whiten'd wave their shadows fling.
> (ll. 124-129)

And again

> The cots, those dim religious groves embow'r,
> . . . . . .
> Each with his household boat beside the door,
> Whose flaccid sails in forms fantastic droop,
> Bright'ning the gloom where thick the forests stoop.
> (ll. 124-129)

The lake's "margin" "hidden" "in chestnut groves" implies shade, while the towns are characterized by "shades" or are situated in "woody sunless glens profound." In turn they "fling" their "shadows" on the lake. The cottages are also located in "dim religious groves" and have "gloom" beside their doors from the thick forests.

But by far the greater number of town scenes in Descriptive Sketches--like Gilpin's "On Landscape Painting"--contain contrasted light and shade, some showing the darkness increasing at sunset, some showing the light

increasing at sunrise:

> Thy towns, like swallows' nests that cleave on
> high,
> That glimmer hoar in eve's last light, descry'd
> Dim from the twilight water's shaggy side.
> (ll. 131-133)

> --Thy lake, mid smoking woods, that blue and grey
> Gleams, streak'd or dapplied, hid from morning's
> ray
> Slow-traveling down the western hills, to fold
> It's green-ting'd margin in a blaze of gold;
> From thickly-glittering spires. . . .
> (ll. 138-142)

This eastern cliff-town illuminated against the surrounding darkness of night is analogous to Gilpin's "castled cliff" standing out against the dark storm cloud:

> [B]ut all its splendour pours
> On yonder castled cliff, which chiefly owes
> Its glory, and supreme effect, to shade.
> (ll. 436-438)

And Wordsworth's morning "blaze of gold" breaks into "blue and grey" lake mists similar to Gilpin's morning:

> Yon lake
> With all its circumambient woods, far less
> Would charm the eye, did not the dusky mist
> Creeping along its eastern shores, ascend
> Those tow'ring cliffs, mix with the ruddy beam
> Of opening day, just damp its fires, and spread
> O'er all the scene a sweet obscurity.
> (ll. 416-422)

Here again, Gilpin has concentrated on the darkness, while Wordsworth has concentrated on the growing light: Gilpin's description ends in "a sweet obscurity" while Wordsworth's ends in "a blaze of gold":

Thus, Wordsworth's scenes resemble Gilpin's scenes. Yet, Wordsworth frequently reverses Gilpin's formula by including more light and seemingly eliminating shade. However, by eliminating the words for shade, Wordsworth doesn't always eliminate the visual perception of shade, which is often implied by his light. In fact, Wordsworth's reaction to Gilpin's picturesque formula frequently causes his poetry to reflect that very formula. For this reason, I claim that the picturesque operates in Descriptive Sketches despite Wordsworth's claims to the contrary.

Motion

As the above examples illustrate, movement characterizes Gilpin's and Wordsworth's scenes. According to Woelfflin this movement is a function of light and shadow, as masses of light and shade "pursue" each other. These moving masses result from our inability to see solid lines surrounding and separating objects in nature. The resulting visual merger of objects also creates an illusion of movement:

> As soon as the depreciation of line as boundary takes place, painterly possibilities set in. Then it is as if at all points everything was enlivened by a mysterious movement. While the strongly stressed outline fixes the presentment, it lies in the essence of a painterly representation to give it an indeterminate character: form begins to play; lights and shadows become an independent element, they seek and hold each other from height to height, from depth to depth; the whole takes on the semblance of a movement ceaselessly emanating,

> never ending. Whether the movement be leaping and vehement, or only a gentle quiver and flicker, it remains for the spectator inexhaustible.
> . . . . . .
> . . .Many elements go to produce the impression of a general movement . . . but the emancipation of the masses of light and shade till they pursue each other in independent interplay remains the basis of a painterly impression. And that means, too, that here not the separate form but the total picture is the thing that counts, for it is only in the whole that that mysterious interflow of form and light and colour can take effect, and it is obvious that here the immaterial and incorporeal must mean as much as concrete objects. (Principles, pp. 19-20)

Thus, moving lights and shadows draw the eye into the "immaterial" and "incorporeal" space around objects. It is this non-corporeal space that Wordsworth later invests with importance.

If we return to An Evening Walk and "On Landscape Painting," we observe that Gilpin's objects as well as his lights and shadows are in motion. Moving objects include the eddies, river, lake, and cloud: "whirling eddies sparkle," while the river "dimpling glides," "dashes down," and "sinks to sleep." The lake "flings its sweeping curves around the shooting cliffs," while "its Proteus shape assumes" "every shade" "from motion and from rest." And the "upheaving cloud" "marching from the east,/Ascends . . . blots . . . and spreads,/ . . . its dusky veil" and "curtains" the "heav'n."

As with Gilpin, Wordsworth's motion is divided among objects, light, and shadow. Wordsworth enlarges his scope of moving objects to include a rill, branches, shrubs,

cascade, kite, steep, cliffs, coves, turf, oaks, and Druid stones: the "huddling rill" is "bright'ning with water-breaks the sombrous gill"; "the branches close"; "shrubs . . . cling"; "a small cascade,/Illumes with sparkling foam the twilight shade"; "the silver'd kite/ . . . wheels her flight"; "the steep . . . rears/Its edge all flame"; the "purple steep" "flings his shadow"; "cliffs aspire"; "coves and secret hollows" "betray" "a purple gleam" "thro a ray/Of fainter gold"; "the gilded turf arrays . . ./Each speck of lawn"; "oaks o'er hand the road"; and "the Druid stones their lighted fane unfold."

Gilpin's moving shades balance his moving lights: "mantling shade" darkens the pool, "shade" is "answ'ring shade," and a "mass of shade" is "pregnant with change/Perpetual," whereas in contrast, the "sun . . . sinking . . ./Pours . . . a splendid ray,/Which tenfold grandeur to the darkness adds," while the "radiance shoots, just tips" the "groves" and "all its splendour pours/On yonder castled cliff."

Wordsworth's moving lights, however, overbalance his moving shadows: "shades protect the hidden wave serene"; "shades . .. were/Spotting the northern cliffs with lights between." In contrast, "slant wat'ry lights . . ./Travel"; "wan noon" is "brooding still" and "breath'd a pale steam around the glaring hill"; "a long blue bar . . . divides" the "sun"[s] "aegis orb" "and breaks the spreading of its golden tides"; this bar "touches" on the dark "purple

steep"; "deep yellow beams" "illume" "the scatter'd boles"; "radiance shoots"; and "the day-star . . ./Gives one bright glance, and sinks." Wordsworth's moment-by-moment account illustrates the movement of lights and shadows produced by sun and clouds.

Wordsworth's verbs and verbals denote gentle motion, whereas Gilpin's verbs and verbals denote stronger motion. The following table compares Gilpin's verbs and verbals with Wordsworth's:

With Light/Shade as Subject	Motion	
	Gilpin	Wordsworth
	upheaving	protect
	marching	spotting
	ascends	travel
	blots	brooding
	spreads	breath'd
	curtains	divides
	mantling	breaks
	darkens	touches
	answ'ring	illume
	change	gives
	sinking	shoots
	pours	glance
	adds	sinks
	shoots	
	tips	
	pours	
	16	13

With Other Subjects	Motion		
	Gilpin	Wordsworth	
	sparkle	huddling	
	dimpling	close	
	glides	cling	
	dashes	illumes	
	flings	sparkling	
	sweeping	silver'd	
	shooting	wheels	
	assumes	rears	
	floating	flings	
		aspire	
		betray	
		bright'ning	
		gilded	
		arrays	
		o'er hand	
		unfold	
	9	glaring	17

With the exception of such verbs as "rears," "flings," and "shoots," Wordsworth's verbs are gentle: for example, "spot," "breath'd," "wheels," "travel," "broad'ning," "touches," "aspire," "betray," and "unfold." With the exception of such verbs as "assumes," "answ'ring," "mantles," "ascends," and "sinking," Gilpin's verbs tend to be more vigorous: for example, "whirling," "upheaving," "marching," "pours," "shoots," "dashes," " flings," and "shooting." The above table also indicates that Gilpin's movement belongs predominantly to light and shade, whereas Wordsworth's movement belongs almost equally to light, shade, and other landscape objects.

As a contrast to movement, calm is described by both Gilpin and Wordsworth. For Gilpin's description of calm--as the river "sinks to sleep, a silent pool"--we find in

Wordsworth many descriptions of calm or passivity. "Quiet" led the narrator up the rill, while "In dark-brown basin its wild waves repose"; "subtle sunbeams shine" on briars that "recline" "o'er the craggs"; "light" is "admitted"; the waves "sleep"; cliffs are "embosm'd"; holms are "untrodden, still, and green"; "shades protect the hidden wave serene"; the "wan noon" is "brooding still"; the hill is "glaring"; cloud shadows "were seen/Spotting" the cliffs; "deep yellow beams" "illume" the tree trunks; and the "brooks" are "liquid gold."

If we compare these calmer verbs, Wordsworth also uses more than Gilpin:

Calm

Gilpin	Wordsworth
sinks	repose
	shine
	recline
	admitted
	sleep
	embosm'd
	protect
	brooding
	glaring
	spotting
	illume

For instance, to Gilpin's "sinks" Wordsworth adds "repose," "recline," "sleep," "embosm'd" "protect," and "brooding."

Finally, Wordsworth uses more verbs of illumination than Gilpin:

Verbs of Illumination

Gilpin	Wordsworth
sparkles	bright'ning
	illumes
	illume
	gilded
	glittering
	glance
	shine
	glaring
	spot
	spotting

To Gilpin's "sparkles" Wordsworth adds "bright'ning," "illumes," "gilded," "glittering," "glance," "shine," "glaring," and "spotting."

In summary, Gilpin's movement occurs twice as frequently with light and shade as with other landscape objects. In contrast, Wordsworth's movement occurs almost as frequently with light and shade as with other landscape objects, and perhaps a little more frequently with other landscape objects. Looking just at moving lights and shades, Gilpin's moving lights balance his moving shades, whereas Wordsworth's moving lights overbalance his moving shades. Wordsworth uses more verbs of calm and passivity than Gilpin. Furthermore, Wordsworth uses a greater number of gentler verbs and verbals than Gilpin. Finally, Wordsworth uses more verbs of illumination than does Gilpin.

We can observe the continuation of the trend toward the more diffused painterly style when we compare Wordsworth with himself. In Descriptive Sketches, light and shade are again agents of movement, but as the following table indicates, the verbs and verbals of motion are hard to distinguish from those of calm:

Movement of Light and Shadow

Wordsworth

stretch	flashing	fling
creep	wheeling	embow'r
tracking	glances	droop
shines	glittering (2)	bright'ning
mounts	shine	cleave
springing	recline	glimmer
blazing	unfold	smoking
throw	flame	gleams
glides	burns	traveling
steals	expire	fold
walking	touch	lurk
shakes	cling	

Verbs like "stretch," "shines," and "lurk" connote either movement or calm and thus produce a subtly vibrating movement.

From this selection of scenes, it appears that Descriptive Sketches condenses motion, light, and shade. For example, "mountain-shades" "stretch" and "creep" "tracking the yellow sun"; "half a village shines" and "half hides itself in shade"; "the restless spire" "mounts like springing fire"; "blazing forests throw/Rich golden verdure on the waves below"; "the sail" "glides" and the "oar" "steals into the shade"; "the Sun walking" "shakes . . . his

flashing shield"; "the fire-clad eagle's wheeling form" "glances"; the "glittering" cliffs "shine" and "recline"; streams "unfold" and "flame with gold"; "the west . . . burns like one dilated sun"; and the mountains "expire." Furthermore, towns "touch" the lake, "lurk in woody sunless glens profound," "cling," and "fling" "their shadows"; "dim" "groves" "embow'r" cottages; sails "droop" "bright'ning the gloom"; towns "cleave" and "glimmer"; "woods" are "smoking"; the lake "gleams"; "morning's ray/Slow traveling" "fold"[s] the lake's "margin in a blaze of gold"; and "spires" are "thickly-glittering."

Therefore, Wordsworth combines verbs of illumination with verbs of gentle motion--"glancing," "flashing," "glittering," and "glimmer"--as well as with verbs of calm--"shine," "flame," and "burns." This gentle motion or calm, expressed in terms of light, characterizes Wordsworth's scenes.

Thus, Wordsworth changes Gilpin's motion in five ways: 1) increasing the number of moving objects, 2) emphasizing moving lights instead of moving shades, 3) increasing the verbs of gentleness, calm, and passivity, and 4) increasing verbs of moving lights. Furthermore, Wordsworth diffuses light over more of his picture--brightens up his picture--as he extends and quiets its movement. Thus, he goes--in Woelfflin's terms--from "picturesque" to "painterly" as his

description begins to move like a Rembrandt painting toward a "completely painterly apprehension of the world" (Principles, p. 27).

The above discussion illustrates that Wordsworth's 1793 poems echo Gilpin's decorative picturesque effects. Nevertheless, while Wordsworth works within the tradition, he is nevertheless moving towards a more diffuse, less decorative picturesque. In reaction to Gilpin's formula, he moves toward the "painterly" by increasing light and making it a subtle agent of motion. Gradually, this motion becomes gentle and spreads to objects, which move together as a living whole.

Notes

[1]William Wordsworth, Wordsworth's Poetical Works, ed. E. de Selincourt (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1947). Excerpts from An Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches are referenced by line from Vol. 1. Excerpts from other Wordsworth poems in this dissertation are referenced by volume and page. Excerpts from Gilpin's "On Landscape Painting," found in Three Essays, are referenced by line, whereas excerpts from Gilpin's prose are referenced by page.

[2]The beginnings of the picturesque movement in Italian landscape painters has been documented by Elizabeth Wheeler Manwaring in Italian Landscape in Eighteenth Century England.

CHAPTER 3
PUTTING AWAY CHILDISH THINGS: The LYRICAL BALLADS

Massing and Childhood

In the landscapes of Lyrical Ballads Wordsworth worked both with and against his picturesque heritage. Wordsworth was ambivalent about the picturesque in these poems, but it was in his mind as his poetry developed. Specifically, he experimented with descriptions of light, motion and space. Wordsworth's ambivalence toward light is indicated by 1) the contradictory methods he uses to depict light and by 2) the contradictory moods he associates with light. For example, in some poems he continues his 1793 practice of emphasizing light, while in other poems he omits direct reference to light and shade altogether. Furthermore, his narrator's attitude toward light varies from hostility and pain to reverence. By 1800 he has relegated massing to poems of childhood.

Wordsworth does not completely abandon massing in 1800. When the poem is about childhood, he often ornaments it with massing. In "Anecdote for Fathers," for example, the description is childlike, and the massing is conspicuous:[1]

> The green earth echoes to the feet
> Of lambs that bounded through the glade,
> From shade to sunshine, and as fleet
> From sunshine back to shade.
>
> (I, 242)

Similarly, in "the Idle Shepherd Boys: Or Dungeon-Ghyll Force," the story of the boys is set in the picturesque massing of sunlit valley and dark ravine. The light of the valley--"Beneath a rock, upon the grass,/Two boys are sitting in the sun"--contrasts with the dark ravine:

> If ever you to Langdale go;
> Into a chasm a mighty block
> Hath fallen, and made a bridge of rock:
> The gulf is deep below:
> And, in a basin black and small,
> Receives a lofty waterfall.
>
> (I, 240)

This "black and frightful rent" also contrasts with the "glittering vapours" of the valley next to it.

Childhood memories are also associated with picturesque massing. In periods of sanity, the protagonist in "Ruth" remembers her childhood in terms of sun, rain, and dew:

> Yet sometimes, milder hours she knew
> Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
> Nor pastimes of the May;
> --They all were with her in her cell
> And a clear brook with cheerful knell
> Did over the pebbles play.
>
> (II, 233)

The protagonist in "The Reverie of Poor Susan" also longs for the landscape of her youth, which she sees in terms of "bright volumes of vapour" and "shade":

She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows through the vale of Cheapside.
. . . . . .
She looks and her heart is in heaven: but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade:
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from her eyes!
(II, 217)

Thus, the nostalgia for childhood is expressed through a nostalgic picturesque of broad lights and shades.

Poems of childhood include poems of education. In poems of education, landscape plays the role of pedagog, the servant who brings his young charge to the grammaticus. In Wordsworth's case, the grammaticus is Nature. In "The Tables Turned" the theme of "Let Nature be your teacher" is set in a picturesque landscape featuring the broad lights and shades of a mountain sunset (reminiscent of An Evening Walk):

The sun, above the mountains' head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.
(IV, 57)

Thus, as he views picturesque massing, the narrator enunciates his theme: Learn from nature, not books. Similarly in "To My Sister," the narrator rejects books in favor of sunlit nature":

> There is a blessing in the air,
> Which seems a sense of joy to yield
> To the bare trees,and mountains bare,
> And grass in the green field,
> . . . . . Come forth and feel the sun,
> . . . . . .
> And bring no book: for this one day
> We'll give to idleness.
>
> (IV, 59-60)

In this scene, the sun is not regarded as a picturesque object in the visual landscape as it is in "The Tables Turned." Instead, it is regarded as a source of energy, i.e., as a force which can be felt on the surface of bodies. Unlike the narrator in "The Tables Turned," this narrator is not just looking at the scene as he would at a picture. Instead, he becomes an integral part of the scene as he feels the sun strike him. Thus, as pedagog, the landscape either visually or tactilely draws the attention of the pais (child) to Nature.

Wordsworth, then, considers the picturesque as a stage necessary or appropriate to childhood but inappropriate to adulthood. And this picturesque stage teaches the young poet. Although light is just one natural agent which brings the artist to Nature, it is perhaps the most conspicuous one since it is almost always present in day-time landscape. Nevertheless, as we will see in Chapter 6, other picturesque landscape agents--breezes, motion, and calm--also function as pedagogs.

On the negative side, Wordsworth's narrator displays a hostile attitude toward picturesque light and shade in "Lines: Written While Sailing on a Boat at Evening." In

this poem the narrator accuses light of deceiving the young poet:

> How richly glows the water's breast
> Before us, tinged with evening hues,
> While, facing thus the crimson west,
> The boat her silent course pursues!
> And see how dark the backward stream!
> A little moment past so smiling!
> And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam,
> Some other loiterers beguiling!
>
> Such views the youthful Bard allure:
> But, heedless of the following gloom,
> He deems their colours shall endure
> Till peace go with him to the tomb.
> (I, 40)

The richly reflected light on the "beguiling" "water's breast" is able to "allure" "the youthful Bard." But this "gleam" is "faithless" and does not "endure." Perhaps picturesque light is faithless because it is no longer able to "beguile" the adult poet. Or, perhaps picturesque light is "faithless" because it abandons the young poet when he becomes an adult. In fact, the personification of "faithless" light on the "water's breast" suggests a beloved woman who tantalizes her lover with the intention of later abandoning him. The poet's distrust of light--which he regards as a deceiver--reveals Wordsworth's love/hate attitude to the picturesque. Furthermore, Wordsworth calls picturesque "dark" an emotional "gloom." This gloomy darkness follows the receding light and suggests that picturesque withdrawal will leave the poet with nothing. It seems that Wordsworth associates nature here with its picturesque representation. Therefore, if he abandons the

picturesque, he must also abandon nature. After Wordsworth resolves this problem for himself, however, he transposes the "faithless gleam" into the "visionary gleam."

The placement of this poem between An Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches in the de Selincourt edition reinforces the claim that this poem expresses Wordsworth's hostility towards the picturesque. From his note which begins, "I had once given to these Sketches the title of Picturesque; but the Alps are insulted in applying to them that term," we know that Descriptive Sketches, the second of these two 1793 poems, is the turning point in Wordsworth's attitude toward the picturesque. Thus, the insertion of an 1800 poem between two 1793 poems suggests a transitional poem between the two earlier poems. The theme of "Lines: Written While Sailing on a Boat At Evening" therefore seems to reinforce the change in Wordsworth's attitude toward the picturesque.

On the positive side, Wordsworth displays a reverential attitude toward light. In "Michael," the beloved Luke is the source of non-empirical light:

> [F]rom the Boy there came
> Feelings and emanations--things which were
> Light to the sun and music to the wind.
> (II, 87)

In other words, Luke vied with the sun and the wind as a beloved object. Similarly, in "To M. H." the sunlight is a "blessing":

> [N]or did sun,
> Or wind from any quarter, ever come,
> But as a blessing to this calm recess,
> This glade of water and this one green field.
> (II, 118)

In other poems, however, Wordsworth contrasts picturesque light and joy with sadness. In "The Eglantine" the flower "bright with sunny showers" is a source of emotional pain because its joy intensifies the poet's grief":

> "Thou eglantine, so bright with sunny showers,
> Proud as a rainbow spanning half the vale.
> . . . . . .
> For thus to see thee nodding in the air,
> To see thy arch thus stretch and bind,
> Thus rise and thus descend,--
> Disturbs me till the sight is more than I can bear.
> (II, 33)

The most obvious change in the 1800 poems is the drastic cut-back of massing from the 1793 poems. Wordsworth often omits direct references to light and shade and instead suggests indirectly a sunny or an overcast day by mentioning the conditions--both environmental and emotional--which accompany light and shade, such as cloud patterns or the narrator's joyful mood.

If we compare cliff scenes from Gilpin's poem, Wordsworth's 1793 poems, and Wordsworth's 1800 poems, we see a steady decrease in overt massing. Where Gilpin writes of "mass of shade," "purple dawn," "the last glimm'ring ray of russet eve," and

> Mark how the sun-beam, steep'd in morning-dew,
> Beneath each jutting promontory flings
> A darker shade; while brighten'd with the ray
> Of sultry noon, not yet entirely quench'd,
> The evening-shadow less opaquely falls,
> (ll. 73-77)

Wordsworth writes in 1793 of the "silver'd kite," and

> Slant wat'ry lights, from parting clouds apace,
> Travel along the precipice's base;
> Chearing its naked waste of scatter'd stone.
> (ll. 91-93)

Already, Wordsworth has reduced the amount of description needed to communicate the presence of light and shadow. Further reduction of light/shade description occurs in 1800, when the observer, instead of mentioning clouds and sky, gives the impression of bright light through time of day and illuminated objects:

> One summer morning we had walked abroad
> At break of day, Joanna and myself,
> --'Twas that delightful season when the broom,
> Full-flowered, and visible on every steep,
> Along the copses runs in veins of gold.
> Our pathway led us on to Rotha's banks;
> And when we came in front of that tall rock
> That eastward looks, I there stopped short--and stood
> Tracing the lofty barrier with my eye
> From base to summit; such delight I found
> To note in shrub and tree, in stone and flower,
> That intermixture of delicious hues,
> Along so vast a surface, all at once,
> In one impression, by connecting force
> Of their own beauty, imaged in the heart.
> (II, 113)

In this scene the deliberate contrast of massing is absent, but the reader looking for this information finds it in the description of the broom, "full-flowered, and visible on

every steep," which "runs" "along the copses" "in veins of gold." Further evidence of implied massing includes the "intermixture of delicious hues" which reinforces a mental image of the bright light which brings out these colors.

The impression of shadow is even more illusory in this scene. The reader has to rely on his own experience of sunlit scenes to place shadow in its logical position with respect to the illuminated objects mentioned. Thus, Wordsworth relies on the reader's experiences, either with landscape or with paintings of landscape, to provide chiaroscuro.

In some poems, moods, such as human contentment, also suggest a sunlit scene. Besides the word "sparkling" in "Nutting," the words "pleasure," "joy secure," and "sweet mood" suggest the mood that comes with sunny, and not with cloudy, weather:

> Perhaps it was a bower
> . . . . . .
> Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
> For ever; and I saw the sparkling foam,
> And--with my cheek on one of those green stones
> That, fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,
> Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep--
> I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
> In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
> Tribute to ease: and of its joy secure,
> The heart luxuriates with indifferent things.
> (II, 212)

In some poems, Wordsworth suggests light and shade both by the narrator's mood and by implication. For instance, in "Inscriptions V" there is no mention of sunlight in the Grasmere Island lake scene. However, the "Stirring breezes"

and "creations lovely as the work of sleep" suggest cloud patterns and hence patches of sunlight. In addition, the narrator's mood of "romantic joy" reinforces the impression of a lake with sunlit, wind-driven clouds:

> [The Poet] looks, through the open door-place,
> toward the lake
> And to the stirring breezes, does he want
> Creations lovely as the work of sleep--
> Fair sights, and visions of romantic joy!
> (IV, 198)

In still other poems, however, the presence of light and shadow is ambiguous and left to the reader's imagination. In the waterfall scene of "Emma's Dell" the words "resplendent" and "bright" suggest bright light and its accompanying shade, while the word "pleasure" suggests a pleasant--hence sunny--mood, but not necessarily:

> At length I to a sudden turning came
> In this continuous glen, where down a rock
> The Stream, so ardent in its course before,
> Sent forth such sallies of glad sounds, that all
> Which I till then had heard, appeared the voice
> Of common pleasure . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . Green leaves were here;
> But 'twas the foliage of the rocks--the birch,
> The Yew, and holly, and the bright green thorn,
> With hanging islands of resplendent furze:
> And on a summit, distant a short space,
> By any who should look beyond the dell,
> A single mountain-cottage might be seen.
> (II, 111-112)

The ambiguity of light here is reinforced when we compare this waterfall with that of 1793, which contains many words for light and shade:

--Then Quiet led me up the huddling rill,
Bright'ning with water-breaks the sombrous gill;
To where, while thick above the branches close,
In dark-brown basin its wild waves repose,
Inverted shrubs, and moss of darkest green,
Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-weeds
between;
Save that, atop, the subtle sunbeams shine,
On wither'd briars that o'er the craggs recline:
Sole light admitted here, a small cascade,
Illumes with sparkling foam the twilight shade.
(ll. 71-80)

In other poems, such as "Michael," however, the scene can be envisioned in any atmospheric condition--sunny or cloudy:

Up the tumultuous brook of Green-Head Ghyll
. . . . . .
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude.
(II, 80-81)

Despite the overt omission of light and shade in these poems, the impression of light and shade frequently emerges nevertheless from light's effects or from the reader's knowledge of landscape. Apparently Wordsworth consciously omitted the picturesque from some descriptions while he wrestled with the problem of describing scenery without using picturesque techniques. Nevertheless, real, daytime landscape does contain light and shade, albeit not in the explicit 60-40 ratio that Gilpin prescribed. Therefore, Wordsworth solved his technical problem by giving the

impression of sunlight indirectly. By describing colors and reflections in water as bright and sparkling, Wordsworth implied nature's chiaroscuro. In order to accomplish this effect, however, Wordsworth depended on the reader's own associations with landscape--be they from nature or from painting.

By his use of light in Lyrical Ballads, Wordsworth is moving in degree from the "picturesque" to the "painterly," that is, from the passive perception of an object to an active way of looking at that object, the object here being light. Wordsworth's shift is evident as he moves from massing, as in "The Tables Turned," to atmospheric light, as in "To My Sister." A perceived and therefore empirical phenomenon, light can be perceived either as corporeal, i.e., reflecting from objects, or as non-corporeal, i.e., atmospheric. To understand the distinction between corporeal and non-corporeal light, we must go back to Woelfflin's "picturesque" and "painterly."

Because they deal with visual perception, Woelfflin's terms "picturesque" and "painterly" deal with empirical phenomena. Within this empirical realm, however, the "picturesque" deals more with the object while the "painterly" deals more with the immaterial realm beyond the object as Woelfflin explains for the painterly: "Sensation now penetrates beyond the solid object into the realm of the immaterial. The painterly style alone knows a beauty of the incorporeal" (Principles, p. 27). Furthermore, "the

'painterly' is treated essentially as a matter of perception in the sense that it does not matter about the object, but that the eye, of its own free will, can perceive everything in one way or the other, painterly or not painterly" (p. 23).

Thus, light can be perceived in the "realm of the immaterial" as well as in the realm of the material. Massing is material or corporeal since it is defined by the bodies reflecting it. Atmosphere, on the other hand, is non-corporeal since it is perceived independently of objects. We see these two ways of depicting light in Gilpin and Wordsworth. Gilpin pictures light in masses, i.e., as reflecting from objects, while Wordsworth pictures light both in masses and as atmosphere, i.e., before it reaches objects.

Thus, in the 1800 poems Wordsworth begins to replace Gilpin's corporeal light with non-corporeal light. For instance, in comparing "The Tables Turned" with "To My Sister," "The Tables Turned" illustrates corporeal light--a mass of reflected light:

> The sun, above the mountains' head,
> A freshening lustre mellow
> Through all the long green fields has spread,
> His first sweet evening yellow.
> (IV, 57)

The "sun" has "spread" his "yellow" "lustre" "through all the long green fields" in a swath of light. Even here Wordsworth has implied--by the swath of light--the evening

shade Gilpin would have stipulated. "To My Sister" illustrates, on the other hand, non-corporeal light--the rays which travel through the atmosphere before they touch objects:

> There is a blessing in the air,
> Which seems a sense of joy to yield
> To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
> And grass in the green field,
> . . . . Come forth and feel the sun.
> (IV, 59)

We see the objects--"trees," "mountains," and "field"--surmounted by the "air" and the "sun." But no reflections or shade are indicated, even though we know they must be there. All we are told is to feel the direct rays on the skin: "Come forth and feel the sun."

Wordsworth infuses this incorporeal light with a non-empirical entity. In "Tintern Abbey" Wordsworth speaks of a mysterious "something" which dwells not only in "the light of setting suns" but also in " the round ocean," "the living air," "the blue sky," and "the mind of man" (II, 262). Such atmospheric phenomena suggest the non-corporeal aspect of picturesque landscape. These natural phenomena--light, air, ocean, and sky--are fluids which occupy the space around and between objects, such as mountains and trees. This space is thus perceived as touching the surfaces of these objects. It is this space which, for Wordsworth, supports the non-empirical "something" that is superior to the empirical world.

In retrospect, Wordsworth's contradictory emotional associations with light suggest his unresolved problem with light. He looks down on picturesque light as a childish technique, yet he loves his light-filled childhood memories. Perhaps Wordsworth is ashamed of his delight in an outmoded technique. Like all artists, he probably feels he must join the ranks of the new and leave behind the old. Therefore, he must describe landscape without being picturesque.

Space, I suggest, replaced Gilpinesque massing as Wordsworth's source of joy and pleasure. Thus, "something far more deeply interfused,/Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns" filled the void left by the "faithless gleam" of his childhood picturesque light. This beloved but "faithless" light was sensual and pagan. But childhood's pagan sensual pleasures are lost with age. So it was with Wordsworth's picturesque. Consequently, Wordsworth stopped feeling the "raptures" of his adolescence when he realized that his "faith" did not belong to the beautiful but "faithless" empirical world. It must have been difficult for Wordsworth to acknowledge the spiritual insignificance of the natural world he loved as a child. To compensate for this loss, Wordsworth turned his attention to non-corporeal atmosphere which clothed this world, and he put into it a non-empirical "something." Therefore, he made this garment of light, air, and sky justify the physical beauty he loved. Later in retrospect, as Wordsworth romanticized his childhood, he idealized the "faithless gleam" into a "visionary gleam."

Motion

Motion is a major picturesque feature. In fact, Woelfflin defines the picturesque in terms of movement:

> . . . We can still isolate as something special those themes whose picturesque character consists in actual conditions which can be demonstrated. These are themes in which the single form is so entwined in a great context that an impression of all-pervading movement arises. If real movement is present, so much the better, but it is not necessary. It may be intricacies of the form which of their very nature produce a picturesque effect, or peculiar aspects and illuminations; over the solid, static body of things there will always play the stimulus of a movement which does not reside in the object, and that also means that the whole only exists as a picture for the eye, and that it can never, even in the imaginary sense, be grasped with the hands. (Principles, p. 24)

Wordsworth's landscape motion becomes more gentle in 1800 than in it was in 1793, and it often attains a state of calm or passivity. However, in spite of their seeming motionlessness, Wordsworth's descriptions do not revert to the stasis of Pope's descriptions, in which "waving groves a chequer'd scene display,/And part admit, and part exclude the day" (Windsor Forest, ll. 17-18). In spite of their editorial motion, Pope's "groves" are chiseled in stone.

Wordsworth also transfers motion from individual objects to the whole landscape. The landscape then takes on a larger movement which is shared by individual objects, even though they are motionless in themselves.

"Emma's Dell" illustrates a gradual slackening of motion. At first, motion is vigorous as the "ardent" stream "sent forth" its sound and "ran with a young man's speed." Then motion diffuses over the whole as the "groves" "urge" the "steps" of "June":

> [The groves] seemed eager to urge on
> The steps of June; as if their various hues
> Were only hindrances that stood between
> Them and their object.
> (II, 111)

Wordsworth indicates further slackening of movement in the "softened" sound of the river and the "contentment" in the air:

> [A]nd yet the voice
> Of waters which the winter had supplied
> Was softened down into a vernal tone.
> . . . . . .
> . . . . [B]ut, meanwhile, prevailed
> Such an entire contentment in the air.
> (II, 111)

In some poems movement contrasts with rest. In "Song: For the Wandering Jew" the rivers

> roar down many a craggy steep,
> Yet they find among the mountains
> Resting-places calm and deep.
> (II, 158)

Furthermore, clouds "love through air to hasten" as well as "to fasten/On the heads of towering hills." Similarly, the raven "gambol[s] like a dancing skiff" yet "loves her haven/In the bosom of the cliff (II, 158-159).

Some poems contain movement, rest, and passivity. In "Nutting" the movement of the water is evident in the "water-breaks" and the "sparkling foam." In contrast, the motionless stones "lay" beneath the bower. Finally, the bower and passive hazels "gave up" their "quiet being":

> [A]nd the shady nook
> Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
> Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
> Their quiet being.

Other poems also illustrate passivity. In "The Idle Shepherd Boys" the pool at the base of the waterfall "receives a lofty water-fall," and the lamb in the pool, in turn, is "Pent/within that black and frightful rent." In "The Brothers" the narrator feels a passive change in the hills, woods, and fields. Leonard,

> looking round . . . imagined that he saw
> Strange alteration wrought on every side
> Among the woods and fields, and that the rocks,
> And everlasting hills themselves were changed.
> (II, 3)

In some poems the movement of the landscape is barely perceptible. In "There Was a Boy," the only movement occurs in the stars which "move," the lake which "glimmers," and the heaven which is "uncertain." In contrast, the hills, trees, rocks, and woods have no verbs of motion as they did in <u>An Evening Walk</u>. Instead, they are "received" into the "bosom of the steady lake" and "enter" into the boy's mind:

> There was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
> And islands of Winander!--many a time,
> At evening, when the earliest stars began
> To move along the edges of the hills,
> Rising or setting, would he stand along,
> Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake
> . . . . . .
> . . . . [T]he visible scene
> Would enter unawares into his mind
> With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
> Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
> Into the bosom of the steady lake.
> (II, 206)

A similar calm exists in <u>An Evening Walk</u>: the waves "sleep," the reflected "shades" "protect" the "Serene" waves, which are "embosm'd" in the lake, while the streams "repose." Yet stronger movement is implied by the "steep" which "flings" its shadow on the lake, "slow lights" which "fall" on the "lake's still bosom," and the mountain's shadow which "reaches" over and "hides" "his subject tides":

> [N]ow [the setting sun] touches on the purple
> steep
> That flings his shadow on the pictur'd deep.
> (ll. 155-156)

> Long may ye roam these hermit waves that sleep,
> In birch besprinkl'd ciffs embosm'd deep;
> These fairy holms untrodden, still, and green,
> Whose shades protect the hidden wave serene.
> (ll. 219-222)

> Slow lights upon the lake's still bosom fall,
> Beyond the mountain's giant reach that hides
> In deep determin'd gloom his subject tides
> --Mid the dark steeps repose the shadowy streams.
> (ll. 336-339)

Thus, the 1800 scene is calmer than this 1793 scene. In "There Was a Boy" (1800) all suggestions of light and shade are contained in three words: the "uncertain" sky,

the "glimmering" lake, and of course the "evening." This condensation nevertheless allows the reader to visualize light and shadow. Furthermore, two of these light adjectives indicate motion--"uncertain" and "glimmering." Thus, Wordsworth both reduces and combines light, shade, and motion. Finally, this quiet landscape does not result in stasis. Quiet as the lake is, it seems to be alive and breathing, as the word "bosom" of the lake suggests.

In other poems, Wordsworth associates motion with living things. In "The Fountain" the streamlet's motion suggests the movement of life: It "fears" "no check, no stay," i.e., no limitations of its movement--"'Twill murmur on a thousand years,/And flow as now it flows" (IV, 72). This living motion makes the narrator's painful thoughts in "The Eglantine" all the more poignant. Consequently, the narrator wishes the motion of the stream to cease:

> "Roll back, sweet Rill! back to thy
> mountain-bounds,
> And there for ever by thy waters chained!
> For thou dost haunt the air with sounds
> That cannot be sustained;
> If still beneath that pine-tree's ragged bough
> Headlong you waterfall must come,
> O let it then be dumb!
> Be anything, sweet Rill, but that which thou art
> now.
> (II, 33)

Wordsworth elsewhere associates motionlessness with death. For example, motionless death is expressed as a "standing pool" in "Matthew": "Poor Matthew, all his frolics o'er,/Is silent as a standing pool" (IV, 69).

This quieting of the landscape accompanies a larger motion. In "To My Sister" seemingly motionless landscape objects are part of a larger motion: 1) the "universal birth" of love which is "stealing" "from heart to heart," 2) "a blessed power that rolls/About, below, above," and 3) the force of trees, mountains, grass, and sun (IV, 60). The narrator wishes to "yield" to and "feel" these forces:

> There is a blessing in the air,
> Which seems a sense of joy to yield
> To the bare trees, and mountains bare
> And grass in the green fields,
> . . . . . .
> Come forth and feel the sun.
>
> (IV, 59)

The two types of motion--individual and diffused--sometimes intersect in a person. This person is identified with the motion of objects, yet he or she is also subject to the larger landscape motion. In "Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower," Lucy imitates moving and non-moving landscape objects: She is "sportive" like the fawn along the mountain springs, "floating" like the clouds, and learning the "motions of the Storm" and "the silence and the calm/Of mute insensate things" (II, 215). Lucy is also subject to the larger landscape movement. At her death she is integrated into the "earth's diurnal course" which carries with it "rocks, and stones, and trees" (II, 216).

At death such a person becomes a genius of the place.[2] Lucy Gray "lives" in the hills in which she disappeared:

Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.
(I, 236)

Similarly, the "shadow of the Danish Boy" suggests a guardian spirit of the mountain valley in which he lived:

And in this dell you see
A thing no storm can e'er destroy,
The shadow of a Danish Boy.
(II, 156)

Furthermore, as "A spirit of noon-day," "The Danish Boy walks here alone, and/Like a dead boy he is serene."

These genii of the place embody the quiet movement of the landscape. As a "spirit," Lucy Gray moves over the landscape:

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.
(I, 236)

The Danish Boy also moves or sits quietly:

The Danish Boy walks here alone
. . . . . .
There sits he; in his face you spy
No trace of a ferocious air,
Nor ever was a cloudless sky
So steady or so fair.
. . . . . .
For calm and gentle is his mien.
(II, 157-158)

The quiet landscape is not disturbed by the activities of bees or birds:

> In clouds above, the lark is heard,
> But drops not here to earth for rest;
> Within this lonesome nook the bird
> Did never build her nest.
> No beast, no bird, hath here his home;
> Bees, wafted on the breezy air,
> Pass high above those fragrant bells
> To other flowers:--to other dells
> Their burdens do they bear.
>
> (II, 157)

In another poem, a genius of the place presides over a decaying ruin. This genius is the stag in "Hart-Leap Well":

> I looked upon the hill both far and near,
> More doleful place did never eye survey;
> It seemed as if the spring-time came not here,
> And Nature here were willing to decay.
> . . . . . .
> Now, here is neither grass nor pleasant shade,
> The sun on drearier hollow never shone;
> So will it be, as I have often said,
> Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all are gone.
>
> (II, 252-253)

I claim that Wordsworth's new motion is analogous to that in Rembrandt's later paintings. When Woelfflin compares the early to the late Rembrandt, he states that the larger motion of the later Rembrandt "is not longer borne by the separate objects in the picture. It lies like a breath over the picture now at rest" (Principles, p. 27). Woelfflin thus presents two kinds of picturesque--"a picturesqueness more inherent in the objects" and a picturesqueness of the total scene, which we have called "painterly":

> [I]n the interweaving of the forms, a total figure is created which is something different from the sum of the parts. The picturesque value of this figure must be rated the higher, the more

> it contains some element of surprise in relation to the familiar form of things. (p. 25)

Each type of picturesque has its characteristic movement. In the first type, the movement is "born by the separate objects of the picture." In the second type, movement "lies like a breath over the picture now at rest." I claim that Wordsworth's scenes achieve this second type of "painterly" movement--which lies like a "breath" "upon the lake's still bosom."

Incorporeal Space

Incorporeal space--the space between landscape objects--is a third picturesque attribute. Woelfflin explains the origin and nature of this picturesque space:

> As soon as the depreciation of line as boundary takes place, painterly possibilities set in. Then it is as if at all points everything was enlivened by a mysterious movement. While the strongly stressed outline fixes the presentment, it lies in the essence of a painterly representation to give it an indeterminate character: form begins to play; lights and shadows become an independent element, they seek and hold each other from height to height, from depth to depth; the whole takes on the semblance of a movement ceaselessly emanating, never ending. Whether the movement be leaping and vehement, or only a gentle quiver and flicker, it remains for the spectator inexhaustible.
> . . . Many elements go to produce the impression of a general movement--we shall speak of these--but the emancipation of the masses of light and shade till they pursue each other in independent interplay remains the basis of a painterly impression. And that means, too, that here not the separate form but the total picture is the thing that counts, for it is only in the whole that that mysterious interflow of form and

> light and colour can take effect, and it is obvious that here the immaterial and incorporeal must mean as much as concrete objects. (pp. 19-20)

In 1800 Wordsworth is interested in this space. He discovers this space in "the light of setting suns," "the round ocean," "the living air," "the blue sky," and "the mind of man." Thus, light, air, ocean, and sky flow around landscape objects and occupy picturesque space. Furthermore, this space is superior to the natural objects it surrounds. The poet in "A Poet's Epitaph" indicates this superiority when he contrasts "the outward shows of sky and earth,/Of hill and valley" with "impulses of a deeper birth." I claim that Wordsworth turned to this space in picturesque landscape as an alternative to massing.

Into this space Wordsworth put a non-empirical "presence," indicated by "something far more deeply interfused" ("Tintern Abbey"), "a spirit in the woods" ("Nutting"), the force of the trees and mountains ("To My Sister"), "an overseeing power/To kindle or restrain" ("Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower"), and

> The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
> That is in the green leaves among the groves,
> [who]
> Maintains a deep and reverential care
> For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.
> (II, 254)
> ("Hart-Leap Well")

This "presence" is thus the naturalized form of the genius of the place.

The non-empirical "presence"--which resides in the light, air, and sky--gives to the adult poet a pleasure of a different sense from that which the picturesque gave to the youthful poet:

> And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.
> (II, 262)

The adult poet, therefore, no longer considers the empirical landscape of primary importance. Instead, primary importance belongs to the "purest thoughts" which <u>derive from</u> the empirical landscape. Indeed, the empirical landscape is the preliminary step to these "purest thoughts":

> Therefore am I still
> A lover of the meadows and the woods,
> And mountains; and of all that we behold from this
> green earth
> . . . . . .
> . . . well pleased to recognize
> In nature and the language of the sense
> The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
> The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
> Of all my moral being.
> (II, 262)

The adult poet, therefore, puts aside his childhood pleasure in physical landscape:

> I cannot paint
> What then I was. The sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock
> The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
> Their colours and their forms, were then to me
> An appetite; a feeling and a love,
> That had no need of a remoter charm,
> By thought supplied, not any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye.--That time is past.
> (II, 261)

Nevertheless, the adult poet seems to be nostalgic for those youthful pleasures; he seems to yearn to enjoy them as he once did. In fact, Wordsworth's degree of regret causes us to suspect that he had not set them willingly aside, but, instead, lost them:

> that time is past,
> And all its aching joys are now no more,
> And all its dizzy raptures.
> (II, 261)

In place of these "aching joys" and "dizzy raptures," the adult poet claims to have found a more desirable "residue":

> Not for this
> Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
> Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
> Abundant recompense.
> (II, 261)

Whether we believe Wordsworth or not, he presents the quandary every person must face with his or her own youth. Wordsworth indicates his solution to this quandary at the beginning of the poem: rejection of the picturesque for the non-empirical. As he picturesquely describes himself

sitting in the landscape of his youth, "under this dark sycamore," he turns his attention to the cliffs that "connect/The landscape with the quiet of the sky." The remainder of the poem justifies his aesthetic change.

In retrospect, it seems that in 1793 Wordsworth tried to circumvent the picturesque by adding more light. As he indicated in his footnote to Descriptive Sketches: "Had I wished to make a picture of this scene I had thrown much less light into it" (de Selincourt, I, 62). In 1800, on the other hand, Wordsworth tries to circumvent the picturesque by removing light. At this point, we must ask why Wordsworth was antipathetic to picturesque massing of light and shade and not to picturesque motion and space. Perhaps artists like Gilpin had exaggerated massing until it became an affectation. Wordsworth clearly wanted to put aside such an affectation. Picturesque motion and space, however, were less obtrusive. As Wordsworth wrestled with the problem of landscape description, this motion and space provided a rich area for further exploitation. When he rejected Gilpinesque massing, however, Wordsworth did not return to linear vision. Having learned to see with picturesque eyes, Wordsworth pursued--knowingly or unknowingly--the remaining avenues of picturesque vision--motion and space.

Wordsworth's descriptions of 1800 are not created *ex nihilo*. They derive from the picturesque 1793 landscapes. Thus, 1800 demonstrates the painterly turning away from the solid object to the space surrounding it. In 1800

Wordsworth comes closer to a living landscape.

Notes

[1]For quotations from Wordsworth's poetry other than An Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches, the volume and page of the de Selincourt edition, instead of the line numbers, will be given.

[2]When we compare Wordsworth's "presence" at Tintern Abbey with Gray's genius loci at the Grande Chartreuse monastery, we can see the difference between Gray's linear style and Wordsworth's painterly style. To begin with, Gray's anthropomorphic god, "Deum," contrasts with Wordsworth's invisible numen, "Presence." Where Gray invokes the god in its linear solidity, "a more present God," amid correspondingly solid topography--"pathless rocks, wild mountain tops and broken-away hills among sounding waters and the night of groves"--Wordsworth finds the indistinct "presence" "more deeply interfused" in the fluid spaces--"the light of setting suns," "the round ocean," "the living air," and "the mind of man." Gray:

> Numen habet, veteresque sylvas.
> . . . Nativa nam certe fluenta
>
> Praesentiorem et conspicimus Deum
> Per invias rupes, fera per juga,
> Clivosque praeruptas, sonantes
> Inter aquas, nemorumque noctem.
>
> [It has a spiritual presence, and old forests.
> . . . For certainly, we perceive
>
> Native streams and a more present God
> Through the pathless rocks, through wild mountain-tops,
> And broken-away hills
> Among sounding waters, and the night of groves.]

Gray's Latin inscription can be found in Elizabeth Manwaring's Italian Landscape in Eighteenth Century England (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1965), p. 111. [First printing 1925.]

CHAPTER 4
THE POEMS OF 1802-1809: FROM GILPIN TO PRICE

Light: From Contrast to Brilliance and Splendour

The poems of 1802-09 work both with and against the picturesque tradition. In these poems Wordsworth bids goodbye to the pleasure of landscape light which he associates with mere impermanence. Wordsworth, like Hartley, was apparently able to think of the picturesque as an educational but finally childish pleasure. Except for a few poems, Wordsworth abandons massing and concentrates on reflected glitters and atmospheric glows. The reflected glitters correspond to Price's "brilliance," and the atmospheric glows correspond to Price's "splendour." Wordsworth also continues to express contradictory emotions toward landscape pleasure. He is nostalgic for the picturesque pleasure of childhood, which he nevertheless represses because it derives from sense perception. Wordsworth's glittering light produces picturesque movement while his descriptions of calm resemble the "repose" of Claude. Finally, space in this period--except for The Prelude (not published until 1850) --seems to have lost the non-empirical "Presence" introduced in 1800.

Several poems indicate Wordsworth's continued hostility toward Gilpinesque massing. The hostility in "Lines: Written While Sailing on a Boat at Evening" (1800) has its counterpart in "The Kitten and the Falling Leaves." For example, the "beguiling" "water's breast" (1800) has its 1802-09 counterpart in the "sky['s]" "lure":

> Vainly glitter hill and plain,
> And the air is calm in vain;
> Vainly Morning spreads the lure
> Of a sky serene and pure;
> Creature none can she decoy
> Into open sigh of joy.
>
> (II, 182)

"Sobered" "Lambs" replace the "heedless" "youthful Bard" of 1800:

> Lambs, that through the mountains went
> Frisking, bleating merriment,
> When the year was in its prime,
> They are sobered by this time.
>
> (II, 182)

The light-reflecting water of 1800 was able to deceive--"With faithless gleam,/Some other loiterers beguiling!"--whereas the light "Of a sky serene and pure" can deceive no longer: "Creature none can she decoy/Into open sigh of joy." Furthermore, in 1800, the youthful poet was susceptible to the "allure" of the light-reflecting water:

> Such views the youthful Bard allure;
> But, heedless of the following gloom,

He deems their colours shall endure
Till peace go with him to the tomb.
(I,40)

The "sobered" lambs, on the other hand, know better and cannot be "decoy[ed]." The narrator suggests two types of knowledge which would account for this sobriety: the knowledge 1) that childhood pleasures come to an end and are followed by unhappiness, or 2) that childhood's sensuous pleasures are replaced by adulthood's (presumably) non-sensuous--and therefore superior--pleasures:

Is it that they have a fear
Of the dreary season near?
Or that other pleasures be
Sweeter even than gaiety?
(II, 182)

Wordsworth emphasizes the superiority of non-sensuous to sensuous pleasures in "Sonnet XI: Composed After a Journey Across the Hambleton Hills, Yorkshire." At first, the narrator pleasurably views "the glowing west" which "with marvellous power/Salute[d] us":

while many a tempting isle,
With groves that never were imagined, lay
'Mid seas now steadfast! objects all for the eye
Of silent rapture.
(III, 25)

But, the narrator believes he should not enjoy the tempting empirical pleasure of the scene because it will not last:

> But we felt the while
> We should [read would] forget them. They are of the sky,
> And from our earthly memory fade away.
> (III, 25)

In "Sonnet XII"--which immediately follows--the sunset reminds the narrator of spiritual pleasure, in contrast to sensual pleasure derived from earth:

> Those words were uttered as in pensive mood
> We turned, departing from that solemn sight:
> A contrast and reproach to gross delight,
> And life's unspiritual pleasures daily wooed!
> (III, 25)

But this thought is itself "unstable": "But now upon this thought I cannot brood,/It is unstable as a dream of night." In other words, landscape's sensuous pleasures are not proper analogs for spiritual pleasure. Therefore, the narrator urges himself to avoid landscape's empirical pleasures:

> Nor will I praise a cloud, however bright,
> Disparaging Man's gifts, and proper food.
> Grove, isle, with every shape of sky-built dome,
> Though clad in colours beautiful and pure,
> Find in the heart of man no natural home.
> (III, 25)

Instead, man should find pleasure in eternal objects:

> The immortal Mind craves objects that endure:
> These cleave to it; from these it cannot roam,
> Nor they from it: their fellowship is secure.
> (III, 26)

Thus Wordsworth here seems to believe he should abandon the empirical for the supernatural, which is superior to it.

Notwithstanding such good advice to himself, the narrator of "Miscellaneous Sonnets II" is tempted by landscape's sensual beauty:

> How sweet it is, when mother Fancy rocks
> The wayward brain, to saunter through a wood!
> An old place, full of many a lovely brood,
> Tall trees, green arbours, and ground-flowers in flocks;
> And wild rose tip-toe upon hawthorn stocks.
> (III, 21)

The "wayward brain" of this narrator enjoys the sensuous pleasures of the wood:

> Verily I think,
> Such place to me is sometimes like a dream
> Or map of the whole world: thoughts, link by link
> Enter through ears and eyesight with such gleam
> Of all things. . . .
> (III, 21)

Abruptly the narrator catches himself before he gives himself up completely to this pleasure, which he believes he must shun: "that at last in fear I shrink/And leap at once from the delicious stream" (III, 21).

When the narrator refers to man's "proper food" in Sonnet XII, he seems to echo eighteenth-century psychologists like Thomas Reid and David Hartley who write that the pleasures of the senses, specifically color and light, are useful to teach children, who must, however,

eventually graduate to the adult pleasures of the intellect and leave sense-pleasures behind. Reid, nevertheless, believes that children learn by the perception of light and color:[1]

> . . . Taste seems to be progressive as man is. Children . . . are disposed to attend to the objects about them; they are pleased with brilliant colours, gaudy ornaments, regular forms, cheerful countenances, noisy mirth, and glee. Such is the taste of childhood, which we must conclude to be given for wise purposes. . . . As they advance in years and in understanding, other beauties attract their attention, which, by their novelty or superiority, throw a shade upon those they formerly admired. . . . The intellectual and moral powers begin to open, and, if cherished by favourable circumstances, advance gradually in strength, till they arrive at that degree of perfection, to which human nature, in its present state, is limited. (II, 546-545)

Hartley makes similar statements about colors, children, and education:

> It is evident, that gay Colours, of all Kinds, are a principal Source of Pleasure to young Children. . . . In Adults, the Pleasures of mere Colours are very languid in comparison of [sic] their present Aggregates of Pleasure, formed by Association. And thus the Eye approaches more and more, as we advance in Spirituality and Perfection, to an Inlet for mental Pleasure. . . . So that our intellectual Pleasures are not only at first generated, but afterwards supported and recruited, in part from the Pleasures affecting the Eye; which holds particularly in respect of the Pleasures afforded by the Beauties of Nature, and by the Imitations of them, which the Arts of Poetry and Painting furnish us with. (I, 207-208)

Since the picturesque produces just such a sensation-oriented pleasure, Reid and Hartley would consider the picturesque to be an educational but childish pleasure.

In one poem, the narrator rhetorically rejects the picturesque while using--consciously or unconsciously--picturesque splendour (atmospheric light) to describe the scene. In "Elegiac Stanzas: Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle, in a Storm, Painted by Sir George Beaumont," the narrator describes the castle in three ways: 1) as his recollection of the castle, 2) as the picturesque castle he would have painted as a youth, and 3) as Beaumont actually painted it. First he recalls the scene as he saw it many years ago, with no hint of light or shade:

> I was thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile!
> Four summer weeks I swelt in sight of thee:
> I saw thee every day; and all the while
> Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.
>
> So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
> So like, so very like, was day to day!
> Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
> It trembled, but it never passed away.
>
> How perfect was the calm! it seemed no sleep;
> No mood, which season takes away, or brings:
> I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
> Was even the gentlest of all gentle things.
> (IV, 258-259)

Next, the narrator describes the would-be picturesque painting of the scene

> Ah! THEN, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
> To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
> The light that never was, on sea or land,
> The consecration, and the Poet's dream;
>
> I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile

Amid a world how different from this!
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house
divine
Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;--
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.
(IV, 259)

Wordsworth's editorial changes for lines 14-16 (1832-50) reinforce the picturesque interpretation of the would-be painting:

. . . and add a gleam,
Of lustre, known to neither sea nor land
But borrowed from the youthful Poet's dream.

Here, Wordsworth has replaced the exaggerated "gleam,/The light that never was, on sea or land,/The consecration, and the Poet's dream" with a mere picturesque gleam: "a gleam,/Of lustre, known to neither sea not land/But borrowed from the youthful Poet's dream." Therefore, I claim that the narrator in 1805-07 idealized, "consecrat[ed]," this "gleam"--this light that never was, on sea or land"--"from the youthful Poet's [picturesque] dream"--i.e., from Gilpin's picturesque. The "gleam" he had to justify in 1805, however, did not need to to be justified in 1832 any longer.

Nevertheless, in 1805-07 as well as in 1832-50, he would have painted this castle "Amid a world how different from this!" i.e., in a picturesque world. In other words, he would have added light for picturesque effect, or "adorned" his "sketch", as Gilpin describes in his notes to "On Landscape Painting":

> But mere light and shade are not sufficient: something of effect also should be aimed at in the adorned sketch. Mere light and shade propose only the simple illumination of objects. Effect, by balancing large masses of each, gives the whole a greater force. . . .
>
> As to giving rules for the production of effect, the subject admits only the most general. There must be a strong opposition of light and shade; in which the sky, as well as the landscape, must combine. But in what way this opposition must be varied--where the full tone of shade must prevail--where the full effusion of light--or where the various degrees of each--depends intirely [sic] on the circumstance of the composition. All you can do, is to examine your drawing (yet in it's [sic] naked out-line) with care; and endeavour to find out where the force of the light will have the best effect. But this depends more on taste, than on rule. (pp. 75-76)

The narrator now, however, rejects this picturesque style: "Such, in the fond illusion of my heart/Such Picture would I at that time have made," and "Such happiness, wherever it be known,/Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind." In other words, the narrator now has a new aesthetic: "So once it would have been,--'tis so no more;/I have submitted to a new control." Unfortunately, this new aesthetic coincides with "a deep distress": "A power is gone, which nothing can restore;/A deep distress hath humanized my Soul" (III, 259). This distress was first

suggested in "Lines: Written While Sailing on a Boat at Evening,"

> Such views the youthful Bard allure;
> But, heedless of the following gloom,
> He deems their colours shall endure
> Till peace go with him to the tomb,
> (I, 40)

and then in "Tintern Abbey,"

> . . . that time is past,
> And all its aching joys are now no more,
> And all its dizzy raptures.
> . . . . . .
> . . . not for this
> Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur. . . .
> (II, 261)

Thus, besides referring to John Wordsworth's death by drowning, the narrator's "deep distress" seems to follow his rejection of the picturesque and its sensuous pleasures. This pattern of picturesque rejection and grief occurs again in "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood." The picturesque quality of the first four lines is unmistakable:

> There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
> The earth, and every common sight,
> To me did seem
> Apparelled in celestial light.
> (IV, 279)

The narrator has never recuperated, it seems, from the loss of this sensuous pleasure: "It is not now as it hath been of yore"; "The things which I have seen I now can see no more"; and "there hath past away a glory from the earth."

It seems that the narrator <u>involuntarily</u> put aside such pleasures, and he complains of his current inability to enjoy them: "Something . . . is gone": "whither is fled the visionary gleam?" (IV, 279-280).

The narrator grants that childhood is the proper time to enjoy landscape's sensual pleasures: "The growing Boy

> Beholds the light, and whence it flows,
> He sees it in his joy;
> The Youth, who daily farther from the east
> Must travel, still is Nature's
> Priest,
> And by the vision splendid
> Is on his way attended.
> (IV, 281)

But between adolescence and adulthood the child loses this capacity: "At length the Man perceives it die away,/And fade into the light of common day." Even though this Ode continues in a Platonic vein, its introduction makes an anti-picturesque point.

As the previous excerpts illustrate, Wordsworth has found another way to depict light. Instead of massing, he simply increases the frequency of gleams and glimmers he had used from the beginning of his career. As early as 1784-85, Wordsworth had written a school exercise containing "glittering waves" and a "trembling lustre":

> The God of day, in all the pomp of light,
> Moves through the vault of heaven, and
> dissipates the night
> Wide o'er the main a trembling lustre plays,
> The glittering waves reflect the dazzling
> blaze.
> (I, 259)

Glitters and glimmers are also present in Gilpin's On Landscape Painting. The mountain surface "glimmers"; river eddies "sparkle"; the mountain top receives a brief "gleam/Of radiance"; and the eye catches the "gleam among the trees" of the forest herd. Gilpin's description of "richness" may also be a reference to glittering light:

> --The richness also of the light depends on the breaks, and little recesses, which it finds on the surfaces of bodies. What the painter calls richness on a surface, is only a variety of little parts; on which the light shining, shews all it's small inequalities, and roughnesses; and in the painter's language, inriches it. (p. 20)

These "small inequalities" of light seem to suggest the kind of sparkles which Price--continuing where Gilpin left off--terms brilliance. In any case, Gilpin refers to "playing lights," "partial lights," and "gleaming lights" in Observations on the River Wye and Several Parts of South Wales, [etc.] Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty: Made in the Summer of the Year 1770.[2] Comments which seem to suggest glittering lights include the following: "The playing lights, which arose from this circumstance on the opposite coast, were very picturesque"; "Often these partial lights are more stationary"; and "A multiplicity of objects,

melted harmoniously together, contribute to enrich it: but without throwing in these gleaming lights, the artist can hardly avoid "heaviness" (5th ed., pp. 139-140).

Thus for Price as for Gilpin, glittering light is picturesque. Price terms it "brilliance" and explains its origin by analogy to a diamond:

> A table diamond, for instance, like other highly polished objects, has a considerable degree of stimulus; but it is only when cut into a number of sharp points and angles, that it acquires the distinguished title of a brilliant. (I, 117)

Rubens' paintings illustrate this brilliance:

> Sometimes those lights are almost unmixed with shade; at other times they burst from dark shadows, they glance on the different parts of the pictures, and produce that flicker (as it is sometimes called) so captivating to the eye. (I, 128-129)

Thus, picturesque glitters and gleams were available to Wordsworth from Gilpin's and Price's theories, as well as from the paintings with which they illustrated these theories.

Wordsworth occasionally used sparkling light in 1793 and 1800 as well. An Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches sparkle, glitter, glance and flash. Lyrical Ballads also has its "faithless gleam," "sparkling foam," and "glimmering lake." However, these glitters and gleams increase in 1802-09. We have already seen them in several poems from this period: "Vainly glitter hill and plain ("The Kitten and the Falling Leaves"), "such gleam/Of all things"

("Miscellaneous Sonnets II"), "a gleam/Of lustre" ("Elegaic Stanzas VI"), and "the visionary gleam" ("Ode: Intimations").

Glitters and gleams enliven many more poems in this period. "Written in March: While Resting on the Bridge at the Foot of Brother's Water" contains a glitter in the fourth line:

> The cock is crowing
> The Stream is flowing,
> The small birds twitter,
> The lake doth glitter,
> The green field sleeps in the sun.
> (II, 220)

Also, the landscape in "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge" glitters:

> Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
> Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
> All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
> Never did sun more beautifully steep
> In his first splendour, valley, rock or hill.
> (III, 38)

Three poems which contain glitters and gleams were not published until 1815 and 1819. In "A Farewell," "the steep rock's breast/Glittered at evening like a starry sky," and in "Poems on the Naming of Places VI" we see the "gleam" of "clouded splendour":

> Thither do I withdraw when cloudless suns
> Shine hot, or wind blows troublesome and strong;
> And there I sit at evening, when the steep
> Of Silver-How, and Grasmere's peaceful lake,

And one green island, gleam between the stems
Of the dark firs, a visionary scene!
And while I gaze upon the spectacle
Of clouded splendour, on this dream-like sight
Of solemn loveliness, I think on thee,
My Brother, and all which thou hast lost.
(II, 122)

Like the "The Waggoner," not published until 1819, the previous poem combines Gilpin's contrasting light and shade with brilliance. Both massed and flickering light contrast with shade as the slanted rays of evening light shine through forest trees, typical of both Gilpin and An Evening Walk. Similarly, both contrast and brilliance abound in "The Waggoner," which begins:

'Tis spent--this burning day of June!
Soft darkness o'er its latest gleams is stealing.
(II, 177)

The following examples from "The Waggoner" illustrate the extent to which Wordsworth indulged picturesque contrast in this poem [italics mine]:

'--There doth she ken the awful form
Of Raven-crag--*black as a storm--*
Glimmering through the twilight pale.
. . . . . .
And see, beyond that hamlet small,
The ruined towers of Threlkeld-hall,
Lurking in a double shade,
By trees and lingering twilight made!
(II, 198)

Among this multitude of hills,
Crags, woodlands, waterfalls, and rills;
Which soon the morning shall enfold,
From east to west, in ample vest
Of massy gloom and radiance bold.

The mists, that o'er the streamlet's bed
Hung low, begin to rise and spread;
Even while I speak, their skirts of grey
Are smitten by a silver ray.
And Lo! . . . . . .
. . . . . .
The stately waggon is ascending
With faithful Benjamin attending,
Apparent now beside his team--
Now lost amid a glittering steam.
(II, 199)

While yet the valley is arrayed,
On this side with a sober shade;
On that is prodigally bright--
Crag, lawn, and wood--with rosy light.
(II, 205)

Wordsworth indicates that he would not have published "The Waggoner" in 1819 without Lamb's urging. In fact, Wordsworth writes in 1819 that he published it only at the request of Charles Lamb:

> When I sent you, a few weeks ago, the Tale of Peter Bell, you asked "why THE WAGGONER was not added?"--To say the truth,--from the higher tone of imagination, and the deeper touches of passion aimed at in the former, I apprehended this little Piece could not accompany it without disadvantage. In the year 1806, if I am not mistaken, THE WAGGONER was read to you in manuscript, and, as you have remembered it for so long a time, I am the more encouraged to hope that, since the localities on which the Poem partly depends did not prevent its being interesting to you, it may prove acceptable to others. Being therefore in some measure the cause of its present appearance, you must allow me the gratification of inscribing it to you; in acknowledgement of the pleasure I have derived from your Writings, and of the high esteem with which . . .
>
> I am very truly yours,
>
> (II, 176)

In this letter Wordsworth apologizes for The Waggoner's lack of "higher tone" and thus suggests that it was not acceptable. I claim that Wordsworth repressed it because he felt that its picturesque style put it at a "disadvantage" to "the higher tone of imagination, and the deeper touches of passion aimed at" in "Peter Bell," which contains no massing, glitters or gleams. This possibility is reinforced by Wordsworth's apology within the poem, in which he refers to a picturesque "theme" "returning" "from hiding-places ten years deep":

> Accept O Friend, for praise or blame,
> The Gift of this adventurous song;
> A record which I dared to frame,
> Though timid scruples checked me long;
> They checked me--and I left the theme
> Untouched;--In spite of many a gleam
> Of fancy which thereon was shed,
> Like pleasant sunbeams shifting still
> Upon the side of a distant hill:
> But Nature might not be gainsaid;
> For what I have and what I miss
> I sing of these;--it makes my bliss!
> Nor is it I who play the part,
> But a shy spirit in my heart,
> That comes and goes--will sometimes leap
> From hiding-places ten years deep;
> Or haunts me with familiar face,
> Returning, like a ghost unlaid,
> Until the debt I owe be paid.
> Forgive me then. . . .
>
> (II, 204)

These "timid scruples" remind us of Wordsworth's famous protest against the picturesque in The Prelude, composed also in 1805:

> [C]omparing scene with scene,
> Bent overmuch on Superficial things,
> Pampering myself with meagre novelties
> Of colour and proportion. [italics mine]
> (XII, 15-18)

The "untouched" "theme" on which "many a gleam/Of fancy" "was shed/Like pleasant sunbeams shifting still/Upon the side of a distant hill" unmistakably connects the "theme" with picturesque light. In fact, the narrator cannot suppress his picturesque urge: "But Nature might not be gainsaid." This urge returns "like a ghost unlaid." Furthermore, this picturesque vision makes the poet happy: "For what I have and what I miss/I sing of these;--it makes my bliss!" He ends his apology for his picturesque indulgence by "Forgive me then. . . ." Thus, Wordsworth comes to terms with picturesque massing and begins to use it again in his compositions, along with brilliance, splendour, movement, and space, which he had learned to used since 1800.

Splendour, or atmospheric light, is as prevalent as brilliance in this period, if not more so. The "Ode: Intimations" contains a good deal of atmospheric light: "Celestial light," "glory," "the fountain light of all our day," "a master light of all our seeing," "radiance which was once so bright," "splendour," and "innocent brightness." The "Elegaic Stanzas VI" also depict atmospheric light: "The very sweetest" "sunbeams that did ever shine."

We can find non-corporeal light also in Wordsworth's school exercise of 1784-85 [Italics mine]:

> The God of day, in all the pomp of light,
> Moves through the vault of heaven, and dissipates the night
> Wide o'er the main a trembling lustre plays,
> The glittering waves reflect the dazzling blaze.
> (I, 260)

However, it is difficult to find atmospheric light in Gilpin or in the 1793 Wordsworth. In 1794, however, atmospheric light is the third type of light Price discusses (the other two are massing and brilliance). He calls it diffused brilliance or splendour, and he considers Claude an example of this splendour:

> The pictures of Claude are brilliant in a high degree; but that brilliancy is so diffused over the whole of them, so happily balanced, so mellowed and subdued by the almost visible atmosphere which pervades every part, and unites all together, that nothing in particular catches the eye; the whole is splendour, the whole is repose; every thing lighted up, every thing in sweetest harmony. (I, 130)

This Claudean splendour characterizes the atmospheric light of the would-be painting in "Elegiac Stanzas VI":

> I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile
> . . . . . .
> Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
> On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.
>
> Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house divine
> Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;--
> Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
> The very sweetest had to thee been given.
>
> A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
> Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;

No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.
(IV, 259)

Similarly, in the "Ode: Intimations" the narrator depicts a Claudian scene of "celestial light' and "radiance which was once so bright":

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light.
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
(IV, 279)

This Claudian atmosphere also surrounds London in "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge" as the "sun" "In his first splendour" "steep"[s] the city in a Claudian blaze of light:

This city now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill.
(III, 38)

As the above excerpts often illustrate, both brilliance and splendour occur frequently in the same scene. In "Written in March While Resting on the Bridge at the Foot of Brother's Water," "the lake doth glitter" while "The green field sleeps in the sun." Similarly, in "The Kitten and the Falling Leaves" "hill" and "plain" "glitter" "vainly" while "Morning" "vainly" "spreads the lure/Of a sky serene and pure." Likewise, in "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge," the city's buildings lie "All bright and glittering" while

"never did sun more beautifully steep/In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill." And in "Poems on the Naming of Places VI," we see the "steep," the "lake," and the "island" "gleam between the stems/Of the dark firs" in "clouded splendour."

Brilliance and splendour are also found in "Elegiac Stanzas VI." The narrator would add brilliance to his painting--"the gleam,/The light that never was, on sea or land"--and he would add splendour:

> Thou shouldst have seemed . . .
> . . . a chronicle of heaven;--
> Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
> The very sweetest had to thee been given.
> (IV, 259)

Similarly, "Ode: Intimations" contains the brilliance of "the visionary gleam" plus the splendour of the earth "apparelled in celestial light."

The Motion of Brilliance and Splendour

As the above examples illustrate, glitters and gleams seem to vibrate and thus add movement to scenes of seeming calm. Thus, movement--both of objects and of the whole landscape--characterizes the scenes of this period. This vibration of light depends on rough surfaces and produces irritation. According to Price, irritation is itself a movement; it is "eager and hurrying" and conveys the idea of "animation, spirit, and variety": "roughness . . . conveys

that [idea] of irritation, but at the same time of animation, spirit, and variety" (I, 115). Irritation--and thus presumably brilliance-- thereby produces pleasure in the spectator through movement:

> We must acknowledge [irritation] to be the source of our most active and lively pleasures: it's nature, however, is eager and hurrying, and such are the pleasures which spring from it. (I, 126-127)

In contrast, diffused brilliance or splendour--illustrated by Claude--is associated with calm or "il riposo di Claudio" [the repose of Claude] (I, 125):

> As almost all the pictures of Claude, represent Mornings and Evenings of the mildest kind, the lights and shadows are such as take off from all harshness, and give to everything an air of softness and repose; both of them qualities very different from those of the picturesque, which demands sudden lights, and deep shadows. (II, 251-252)

For Price, as this passage illustrates, repose belongs more correctly to beauty. Nevertheless, since Claude was one of the eighteenth century's prime examples of the picturesque, Price had to graft Claude into his picturesque structure. He did so by considering Claude more beautiful than picturesque:

> The same principles of light and shadow, the same attention to the effects of variety and intricacy, which are so strongly displayed in the pictures of Ostade may be traced even in those of Claude Lorraine; though in him the character of beauty infinitely prevails, and that of picturesqueness is only subordinate. (II, 327-328)

Even in Claude's "repose," however, light's movement is perceptible as a "gradual fading" of the "glimmering landscape":

> There is, however, no small difficulty in uniting breadth, with the detail, the splendid variety, and marked character of nature. Claude is admirable in this, as in almost every other respect; which the greatest accuracy of detail, and truth of character, his pictures have the <u>breadth</u> of the simplest washed drawing, or aquatinta print, where little else is expressed, or intended. In a strong light, they are full of interesting and entertaining particulars; and as twilight comes on, I have often observed in them the same gradual fading of the glimmering landscape, as in a real nature. (I, 156)

Thus, through his distinction between broad lights and shades (massing) and brilliance, Price anticipates Woelfflin's distinction between "picturesque" and "painterly"--Price's broad lights and shadows corresponding more to Woelfflin's objective "picturesque," his brilliance and splendour corresponding more to Woelfflin's "painterly."

Brilliance and splendour thus add movement to Wordsworth's seemingly calm landscapes: while "The green field sleeps in the sun," "Small clouds are sailing," "the stream is flowing," and "The snow hath retreated" ("Written in March: While Resting on the Bridge at the Foot of Brother's Water"). Similarly, in "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge," the "calm so deep" consists of the "river" which "glideth" and the city's "mighty heart" which, we know, beats, yet is "lying still." The result is a living, quietly moving scene:

> Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
> The river glideth at his own sweet will;
> Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
> And all that mighty heart is lying still.
> (III, 38)

Gentle motion and calm occur together also in "Elegaic Stanzas VI." Here repose is suggested by the narrator's recollection of the castle:

> Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.
> So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
> So like, so very like, was day to day!
> When'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
> It trembled, but it never passed away.
>
> How perfect was the calm! it seemed no sleep;
> No mood, which season takes away, or brings:
> I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
> Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.
> (IV, 259)

Even in this "perfect calm," the image "trembled" with the "gentlest" movement, and the notion of "sleep" presupposes something living.

The picture the narrator would paint of this scene would likewise contain motion and calm:

> A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
> Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
> No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
> Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.
> (IV, 259)

Here the only motion which disturbs the "Elysian quiet" is the "moving tide, a breeze/Or merely silent Nature's breathing life." This gentle motion contrasts with the violent motion of Beaumont's "sublime" painting of the

castle and nearby ship:

> That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
> This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!
> . . . . . .
> The lightening, the fierce wind, and trampling
> waves.
>
> (IV, 260)

Incorporeal Space: The Temporary Absence of Presence

Space in these poems is occupied by non-corporeal light, which we have also called atmospheric light, diffused brilliance, and splendour. We continue to find this space in the "light of setting suns," "the round ocean," "the living air," and "the blue sky" throughout 1802-09. When we search this space for the non-empirical Presence of "Tintern Abbey," however, we only find "the moving tide, a breeze,/Or merely silent Nature's breathing life" ("Elegaic Stanzas VI"). The "moving tide" corresponds to "the round ocean" while "a breeze" and "silent Nature's breathing life" correspond to "the living air" of "Tintern Abbey." The Presence of "Tintern Abbey" has been reduced to a breath: "silent Nature's breathing life."

In poems such as "Ode: Intimations" and "The Kitten and the Falling Leaves," however, we find nothing in this space. Instead, we begin to fear that the narrator's optimism of finding "something far more deeply interfused"--"Abundant recompense" for the "aching joys" and "dizzy raptures" of lost sensuous childhood "passion"--was not justified.

Nothing has filled childhood's sensuous void: "The things which I have seen I now can see no more"; "There hath past away a glory from the earth"; and "Whither is fled the visionary gleam?" ("Ode: Intimations").

This loss accompanies an emotional sadness. The only signs of happiness are found in the sensuous pleasure the narrator is so determined to suppress: "Many a tempting isle" and "objects all for the eye/Of silent rapture" ("Sonnet XI"); "How sweet it is . . ./. . . to saunter through a wood!" ("Miscellaneous Sonnets II"), "a sky of bliss" ("Elegaic Stanzas VI"), "the fountain light of all our day,/. . . a master light of all our seeing," ("Ode: Intimations"); and "For what I have and what I miss/I sing of these;--It makes my bliss!" ("The Waggoner").

This emptiness does not persist, however. In The Prelude, published in 1805, Wordsworth again fills his landscape space with that "Presence" introduced in "Tintern Abbey"--a Presence which moves, breathes, and lives in the landscape.

Notes

[1] Thomas Reid, Essays on the Powers of the Human Mind, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute, 1803); David Hartley, Observations on Man, 2 vols. in one (Gainesville: The University Presses of Florida, 1966). Reid's views were first published in 1785 and Hartley's in 1749.

[2]William Gilpin, Observations on the River Wye, 5th ed. (London: T. Cadell Junior and W. Davies, 1800). [First published 1792.]

CHAPTER 5
EDUCATION IN THE PRELUDE: FROM IRRITATION TO ILLUMINATION

Light as Pedagog

In The Prelude of 1805 Wordsworth continues rhetorically to deny Gilpin's picturesque principles. At the same time he continues to employ picturesque elements of brilliance, splendour, motion, and space. Furthermore, brilliance and splendour teach the poet. Price and Knight contended that light reflected from rough surfaces irritates the eye, and Price contended further that this irritation causes curiosity. Wordsworth has created a pattern of light-produced curiosity as the means by which Nature teaches the youthful poet, not only with brilliance but also with splendour.

Motion also teaches. This motion is caused by the mysterious non-empirical Presence in landscape space, introduced in "Tintern Abbey." This Presence is non-empirical, yet it motivates the empirical world as a breath or breeze, voice or language. This breath connects the empirical world of "the light of setting suns," "the round ocean," "the living air," and "the blue sky" with "the mind of man," specifically with the mind of the poet. Thus, the Presence uses the empirical world to teach the poet.

This Presence is variously called Being, Soul, Spirit, Life, Nature, and Imagination.

Wordsworth describes both an empirical and a non-empirical world. And both have their counterparts in the poet's mind. The poet's inner creative light corresponds to landscape light; his thoughts, emotions and inner calm correspond to landscape motion and calm; the Presence corresponds to man's Divine Soul; and the "living breath" corresponds to the Poet's utterance.

As he reiterates his rejection of the picturesque, the narrator claims instead to describe scenery realistically. The narrator claims that in his youth he enjoyed Nature realistically with his eye, heart, and intellect, but that he learned, unhappily, to alter reality with rules of art:

> Oh! Soul of Nature, excellent and fair,
> That didst rejoice with me, with whom I too
> Rejoiced, through early youth before the winds
> And powerful waters, and in lights and shades
> That march'd and countermarch'd about the hills
> In glorious apparition, now all eye
> And now all ear; but ever with the heart
> Employ'd, and the majestic intellect,
> Oh! Soul of Nature that dost overflow
> With passion and with Life, . . .
> . . . . . .
> But through presumption, even in pleasure pleas'd
> Unworthily, disliking here, and there,
> Liking, by rules of mimic art transferr'd
> To things above all art. But more, for this,
> Although a strong infection of the age,
> Was never much my habit, giving way
> To a comparison of scene with scene,
> Bent overmuch on superficial things,
> Pampering myself with meagre novelties
> Of colour and proportion, to the moods
> Of time and season, to the moral power

The affections, and the spirit of the place,
Less sensible.
(VI, 210-211)

Wordsworth claims that his female companion helped restore his ability to view nature realistically:

She welcom'd what was given, and craved no more.
Whatever scene was present to her eyes,
That was the best, to that she was attuned.
(VI, 211-212)

In other words, she did not embellish the scene as Gilpin would have. This attempt to view nature realistically would account for Wordsworth's bright but frequently "sunless" landscapes of 1800.

Despite this anti-picturesque manifesto, The Prelude abounds with picturesque characteristics. Even massing has returned. However, Wordsworth has learned to speak of light and shade realistically, without exaggerating them in a Gilpinesque manner:

[I] came, erelong,
To a green shady place where down I sate
Beneath a tree, slackening my thoughts by choice,
And settling into gentler happiness.
'Twas Autumn, and a calm and placid day,
With warmth as much as needed from a sun
Two hours declin'd towards the west, a day
With silver clouds, and sunshine on the grass,
And, in the shelter'd grove where I was couch'd
A perfect stillness.
(VI, 3)

And

> Hence rustic dinners on the cool green ground,
> Or in the woods, or near a river side,
> Or by some shady fountain, while soft airs
> Among the leaves were stirring, and the sun
> Unfelt, shone sweetly round us in our joy.
> (VI, 22)

The atmosphere in these two descriptions seems to be that of a real scene; it is not exaggerated as the following scene in An Evening Walk:

> Gazing the tempting shades to them deny'd,
> When stood the shorten'd herds amid the tide
> Where, from the barren wall's unshelter'd end,
> Long rails into the shallow lake extend;
> When schoolboys stretch'd their length upon the green
> And round the humming elm, a glimmering scene!
> (ll. 41-46)

Nor, is it condensed and partly left up to the reader's imagination as in "Tintern Abbey":

> The day is come when I again repose
> Here, under this dark sycamore.
> (II, 259)

In other words, Wordsworth no longer avoids massing. In fact, The Prelude contains a variety of methods of depicting light and shade developed over the years--massing, implied light and shade, brilliance, and splendour. For instance, Wordsworth uses massing boldly:

> Oh! soul of Nature, excellent and fair,
> That didst rejoice with me, with whom I too
> Rejoic'd, through early youth before the winds
> And powerful waters, and in lights and shades
> That march'd and countermarch'd about the hills
> In glorious apparition.
> (VI, 210)

And he calls upon the reader to add the unmentioned shade of gusty afternoons before the storm:

> --Unfading recollections! at this hour
> The heart is almost mine with which I felt
> From some hill-top, on sunny afternoons
> The Kite high up among the fleecy clouds
> Pull at its rein, like an impatient Courser,
> Or, from the meadows sent on gusty days,
> Beheld her breast the wind, then suddenly
> Dash'd headlong; and rejected by the storm.
> (VI, 15)

He even deliberately confuses the reader by mingling images of reflection and refraction, opaque and transparent, as in Monet's Waterlilies:

> Yet often [one] is perplex'd, and cannot part
> The shadow from the substance, rocks and sky,
> Mountains and clouds, from that which is indeed
> The region, and the things which there abide
> In their true dwelling; now is cross'd by gleam
> Of his own image, by a sunbeam now
> And motions that are sent he knows not whence,
> Impediments that make his task more sweet.
> (VI, 60)

But perhaps Wordsworth's use of brilliance is the most striking use of light in The Prelude. In almost all instances where it is used, brilliance produces curiosity and thus stimulates the poet's education. Price explains this process of light-produced curiosity. According to

Price, brilliance irritates the spectator's eye and stimulates curiosity. The process begins when broken lines cause brilliant light reflections and shadowy recesses [italics mine]:

> In all cases where there is a strong effect of light, whether immediate or reflected, there is of course a real irritation on the organ: and it probably will be admitted, that there is a greater degree of it when the rays strike on pointed or angular, than on smooth and even surfaces (I, 118). . . . [Y]et the most constant and manifest stimulus which rough and abrupt objects produce in picturesque scenery, is that of curiosity. This will clearly appear, if we consider in how much greater a degree all that most excites and nourishes curiosity abounds in scenes where the lines and forms are broken and abrupt, than in those where they are smooth and flowing. Then each of these broken projections and fragments, have as many suddenly varying forms and aspects as they have breaks, even when the sun is hidden; but when it does shine upon them, each break is the occasion of some brilliant light, opposed to some sudden shadow. All such deep coves, and hollows, as are usually found in this style of scenery, invite the eye to penetrate into their recesses, yet keep its curiosity alive and unsatisfied; whereas in the other, the light and shadow has the same uniform, unbroken character as the ground itself. (I, 122-123)

Similarly in The Prelude, brilliance motivates the child to learn by "means" of gentle light. In other words, brilliance--or light--is again a pedagog--"seeking him/With gentlest visitation"--who brings the child to the teacher--Nature:

> Praise to the end!
> Thanks likewise for the means! But I believe
> That Nature, oftentimes, when she would frame

> A favour'd Being, from his earliest dawn
> Of infancy doth open up the clouds,
> As at the touch of lightning, seeking him
> With gentlest visitation. . . .
> (VI, 11)

I claim that curiosity is the mechanism by which this light attracts the child's eye. The episode of the stolen boat describes one such childhood lesson. Beginning with a personification of the pedagog, "One evening (surely I was led by her)," the narrator describes a scene of moonlight reflections and sparkles: "The moon was up, the Lake was shining clear/Among the hoary mountains" (VI, 11). The seemingly unimportant reflections of the eddies circling from the oar tips "melt" together into a "track/Of sparkling light." This light track stretches behind the boat in the direction of the dark mountain which rises in seeming admonition and pursuit:

> [N]ot without the voice
> Of mountain-echoes did my Boat move on,
> Leaving behind her still on either side
> Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
> Until they melted all into one track
> Of sparkling light.
> (VI, 11-12)

Like a pedagog, the track of reflected light seems to point to "the huge cliff" which "uprear'd its head" and "With measur'd motion, like a living thing,/Strode after me" (VI, 12). Thus, light catches the child's eye, and his resulting curiosity leads his eye to the didactic target.

The narrator's education continues in the skating episode. Rejecting the domestic summons of sunset-reflecting windows--"The cottage windows through the twilight blaz'd,/I heeded not the summons"--the narrator instead follows Nature's light--"sparkling stars" and "orange sky of evening": "while the stars,/Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west the orange sky of evening died away" (VI, 13-14). Rejecting even his companions, he touches a star's reflection with his skate, as if to reach the star itself,

> leaving the tumultuous throng,
> To cut across the image of a star
> That gleam'd upon the ice.
> (VI, 14)

Thus, the didactic message of these episodes concerns the knowledge of high things. Even though the young narrator viewed these "gleams" while he was in a "fit of vulgar joy," he was not led by these pedagogues to "vulgar" sensuous knowledge:

> Ye Presences of Nature, in the sky
> And on the earth! Ye visions of the hills!
> And Souls of lonely places! can I think
> A vulgar hope was yours when Ye employ'd
> Such ministry. . . .
> (VI, 18)

Instead, they led him to truths which "elevate the mind," even though these truths were

doom'd to sleep
Until maturer seasons call'd them forth
To impregnate and to elevate the mind.
(VI, 18)

Wordsworth summarizes the brilliance/curiosity/education process by the "Gleams like the flashing of a shield" with which "the earth/And common face of Nature spake to [him]/Rememberable things" (VI, 18).

Wordsworth also uses glitters and flashes to illustrate how Nature in books speaks to the narrator: "Stirr'd to ecstacy" "By glittering verse," the child "doth"

> Receive enduring touches of deep joy
> From the great Nature that exists in works
> Of mighty Poets. Visionary Power
> Attends upon the motions of the winds
> Embodied in the mystery of words.
> There darkness makes abode, and all the host
> Of shadowy things do work their changes there,
> As in a mansion like their proper home;
> Even forms and substances are circumfused
> By that transparent veil with light divine;
> And through the turnings intricate of Verse,
> Present themselves as objects recognis'd,
> In flashes, and with a glory scarce their own.
> [italics mine]
> (VI, 84)

Like a landscape, this description has "darkness," "shadowy things," "motions of the winds," "circumfused" "light divine," and "turnings" which produce "flashes" of light. These "turnings" resemble picturesque broken lines which produce "flashes" or brilliance, and the "circumfused" "light divine" resembles atmospheric light or splendour. Furthermore, the "darkness" and "shadowy things" resemble Price's "deep coves, and hollows, as are usually found in

this style of scenery, [which] invite the eye to penetrate into their recesses, yet keep its curiosity alive and unsatisfied" (Price, I, 121-123).

Like brilliance, splendour also produces curiosity. Price writes that both splendour and brilliance cause irritation: "In all cases where there is a strong effect of light, whether immediate or reflected [italics mine] there is of course a real irritation on the organ" (I, 118). (Brilliance would be "immediate" light, and splendour would be "reflected" light). Therefore, splendour also causes curiosity and is thus an agent in the educational process.

Wordsworth's splendour specifically leads the child to love and revelation. The five-year-old begins these lessons on sunny summer afternoons:

> Oh! many a time have I, a five years Child,
> A naked Boy, in one delightful Rill,
> A little Mill-race sever'd from his stream,
> Made one long bathing of a summer's day,
> Bask'd in the sun, and plunged, and bask'd again
> Alternate all a summer's day, or cours'd
> Over the sandy fields, leaping through groves
> Of yellow grunsel, or when crag and hill,
> The woods, and distant Skiddaw's lofty height,
> Were bronz'd with a deep radiance, stood alone
> Beneath the sky, as if I had been born
> On Indian Plains, and from my Mother's hut
> Had run abroad in wantonness, to sport,
> A naked Savage, in the thunder shower.
> VI, 9

In this passage we recognize the storm-cloud behind the sunlit cliff from An Evening Walk. As a sunset-before-storm scene, we see the sunlight streaming under the western edge of the storm cloud, illuminating the valley, eastern

mountain, and woods,

> when crag and hill,
> The woods, and distant Skiddaw's lofty height,
> Were bronz'd with a deep radiance.
> (VI, 9)

This splendour first taught him to love the empirical world: "The Rill" in the child's sunny summer afternoon "was a Playmate whom we dearly lov'd" (VI, 9). Again, the narrator learns to love nature "in tenderness of thought" when he sees the splendour of the moon-lit sea's "field of light" and "three long leagues/Of shining water":

> How when the Sea threw off his evening shade
> And to the Shepherd's huts beneath the crags
> Did send sweet notice of the rising moon,
> How have I stood, to fancies such as these,
> Engrafted in the tenderness of thought,
> . . . . . .
> Even while mine eye has mov'd o'er three long leagues
> Of shining water, gathering, as it seem'd,
> Through every hair-breadth of that field of light,
> New pleasure, like a bee among the flowers.
> (VI, 17-18)

Here, the simile of the bee pollinating flowers supports the theme of love for the physical world.

The sun then becomes a focus of the boy's love:

> [A]lready I began
> To love the sun, a Boy I lov'd the sun,
> Not as I since have lov'd him, as a pledge
> And surety of our earthly life, a light
> Which while we view we feel we are alive;

> But, for this cause, that I had seen him lay
> His beauty on the morning hills, had seen
> The western mountain touch his setting orb.
> (VI, 25)

In turn, the sun loves the earth:

> [The flock fled]
> Through rocks and seams of turf with liquid gold
> Irradiate, that deep farewell light by which
> The setting sun proclaims the love he bears
> To mountain regions.
> (VI, 129)

The sun also loves the country folk: "them the Morning light/Loves as it glistens on the silent Rocks" (VI, 127). In these two scenes the familiar sunset description becomes a lesson in love, as the sun touches the "morning hills" and "silent Rocks" and, in turn, is touched by "the western mountain." The narrator learns this lesson well, and in his adolescence he feels the pleasure of love for a landscape steeped in "Youth's golden gleam":

> o'er paths and fields
> In all that neighbourhood, through narrow lanes
> Of eglantine, and through the shady woods,
> And o'er the Border Beacon, and the Waste
> Of naked Pools, and common Crags that lay
> Expos'd on the bare Fell, was scatter'd love,
> A spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam.
> (VI, 91)

The love of human Nature is the highest form of love splendour teaches. The flash and radiance of the setting sun reveal human Nature in Shepherd's Form:

> When round some shady promontory turning,
> His Form hath flash'd upon me, glorified
> By the deep radiance of the setting sun:
> . . . . . .
> . . . Thus was Man
> Ennobled outwardly before mine eyes,
> And thus my heart at first was introduc'd
> To an unconscious love and reverence
> Of human Nature. . . .
> (VI, 137)

The "flash" of light from the shepherd's figure is brilliance; "the deep radiance of the setting sun," which "glorified" the shepherd, is splendour. Both serve as pedagogs to lead the narrator to love his fellow man.

Wordsworth first described the shepherd in An Evening Walk:

> Waving his hat, the shepherd in the vale,
> Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale,
> That, barking busy 'mid the glittering rocks,
> Hunts, where he points, the intercepted flocks.
> (ll. 165-168)

This shepherd passage was preceded and followed by 21 lines describing the setting sun's brilliantly reflecting light. In The Prelude, however, the shepherd has become the focus for the sun's reflected light, both at sunset--described above--and at sunrise:

> He quits his home
> At day-spring, and no sooner doth the sun
> Begin to strike him with a fire-like heat
> Than he lies down upon some shining place
> And breakfasts with his Dog.
> (VI, 136)

Splendour also leads the narrator to non-empirical revelation. On a morning of quiet splendour, the narrator receives an unconscious enlightenment that he is "a dedicated Spirit":

> Magnificent
> The morning was, in memorable pomp,
> More glorious than I ever had beheld.
> The Sea was laughing at a distance; all
> The solid Mountains were as bright as clouds,
> Grain-tinctured, drench'd in empyrean light;
> And, in the meadows and the lower grounds,
> Was all the sweetness of a common dawn,
> Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
> And Labour ere going forth into the fields.
> --Ah! need I say, dear Friend, that to the brim
> My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
> Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
> Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
> A dedicated Spirit.
> (VI, 62)

As my Chapter 6 illustrates, Wordsworth expands the splendour of revelation in the poems of 1814 and after.

Motion as Pedagog

The Prelude vibrates with the tension of picturesque motion and calm. Book I sets the tone of "perfect stillness" and a "calm and placid day":

> [I] came erelong,
> To a green shady place where down I sate
> Beneath a tree, slackening my thoughts by choice,
> And settling into a gentler happiness.
> 'Twas Autumn, and a calm and placid day,
> With warmth as much as needed from a sun
> Two hours declin'd toward the west, a day

With silver clouds, and sunshine on the grass,
And, in the shelter'd grove where I was couch'd
A perfect stillness.
(VI, 3)

The words "slackening," "settling," and "declined" provide the only hint of motion. In contrast, Book I contains a scene of wind-caused motion:

Oh! when I have hung
Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
But ill sustain'd, and almost, as it seem'd,
Suspended by the blast which blew amain,
Shouldering the naked crag; Oh! at that time,
While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
Blow through my ears! the sky seem'd not a sky
Of earth, and with what motion mov'd the clouds!
(VI, 10)

Wordsworth can also describe motion economically. In 1805 he further reduces the gentle motion and glimmer of the lake in "There Was a Boy" (1798) to a single noun phrase--"The trembling lake":

among woods
At noon, and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling Lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills I homeward went
In solitude, such intercourse [with life and
nature] was mine
(VI, 13)

"The trembling lake" on "calm summer nights" is a setting for the communication or "intercourse" between "life and nature" and the young poet. Thus motion and calm are also pedagogs. They produce corresponding "emotion" and "moods/Of calmness" in the narrator's mind: "From nature

doth emotion come, and moods/Of calmness equally are nature's gift" (VI, 218). In the following rhetorical passage--which is not a scene--the narrator tells us that his mind is "mov'd" to "delight" by both "tumult" and "tranquil scenes":

> And not alone,
> In grandeur and in tumult, but no less
> In tranquil scenes, that universal power
> And fitness in the latent qualities
> And essences of things, by which the mind
> Is mov'd by feelings of delight, to me
> Came strengthen'd with a superadded soul,
> A virtue not its own.
> (VI, 29)

The result of Nature's "interchange/Of peace and excitation" is to "rouz[e]" the poet's "Genius" to "seek the truth":

> Hence it is,
> That Genius which exists by interchange
> Of peace and excitation, finds in [Nature]
> His best and purest Friend, from her receives
> That energy by which he seeks the truth,
> Is rouz'd, aspires, grasps, struggles, wishes,
> craves.
> (VI, 218)

Furthermore, motion teaches emotion or passion, and calm teaches obedience. The narrator says that he was as "obedient" to the "passion" of Nature, as a lake which reflects "the sky's motion":

> [S]uffice it here to add
> That whatsoe'er of Terror or of Love,
> Or Beauty, Nature's daily face put on

> From transitory passion, unto this
> I was as wakeful, even, as waters are
> To the sky's motion; in a kindred sense
> Of passion was obedient as a lute
> That waits upon the touches of the wind.
> (VI, 37-38)

Calm links the narrator's mind with the empirical world:

> At the first hour of morning, when the Vale
> Lay quiet in an utter solitude.
> How shall I trace the history, where seek
> The origin of what I then have felt?
> Oft in these moments such a holy calm
> Did overspread my soul, that I forgot
> That I had bodily eyes, and what I saw
> Appear'd like something in myself, a dream,
> A prospect in my mind.
> (VI, 30)

The narrator's mind is thus fitted "to receive" truth by means of Nature's "happy stillness": "From [Nature, Genius receives] that happy stillness of the mind/Which fits him to receive it, when unsought" (VI, 218).

Incorporeal Space as Pedagog

In The Prelude, not published until 1850, landscape space is replete with the non-empirical Presence which was suppressed in the published poems of 1802-09. As the next few pages illustrate, this Presence is referred to as a Being, Soul, Spirit, Mind, Nature, Life, or Imagination. As the Imagination or Soul of Nature, the Presence manifests itself on Mt. Snowdon:

> [I]n that breach
> Through which the homeless voice of waters rose,
> That dark deep thoroughfare had Nature lodg'd
> The Soul, the Imagination of the whole.
> (VI, 230)

This Presence or Being gives life, movement, breath, breezes, and voices to the landscape:

> I felt the sentiment of Being spread
> O'er all, that, lost beyond the reach of thought
> And human knowledge, to the human eye
> Invisible, yet liveth to the heart,
> O'er all that leaps, and runs, and shouts, and sings,
> Or beats the gladsome air, o'er all that glides
> Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself
> And mighty depth of waters. Wonder not
> If such my transports were; for in all things now
> I saw one life, and felt that it was joy.
> (VI, 31-32)

Thus, this Presence moves and gives life to "the light of setting suns," "the round ocean," "the living air," "and the blue sky." Or in The Prelude's words, the Presence surrounds "all that leaps," or "beats the gladsome air" and "all that glides/Beneath the wave."

The narrator thus perceives this Presence through its animating breath or voice, as the "voice of waters" on Mt. Snowdon indicates. In the following passage, he "felt" this Presence when he "breath'd" the "Evening air":

> And that still Spirit of the Evening air!
> Even in this joyous time I sometimes felt
> Your presence, when with slacken'd step we breath'd
> Along the sides of the steep hills, or when,
> Lighted by gleams of moonlight from the sea,

We beat with thundering hoofs the level sand.
(VI, 24)

This breath gives motion to the landscape:

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought!
That giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion. . . .
(VI, 12-13)

And this breath permeates the entire empirical world:

[T]he great mass
Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
That I beheld respired with inward meaning.
Thus much for the one Presence, and the Life
Of the great whole.
(VI, 37-38)

The poet feels this breath in the breezes and winds that blow throughout The Prelude. Book I begins with "this gentle breeze/That blows from the green fields and from the clouds/And from the sky," and it "beats against [the narrator's] cheek" (VI, 12-13). It is presumably this breath which links "the light of setting suns," "the round ocean," and "the living air" with "the mind of man." In other words, this breath communicates with the poet's mind:

Ye motions of delight, that through the fields
Stir gently, breezes and soft airs that breath
The breath of Paradise, and find your way
To the recesses of the soul! Ye Brooks
Muttering along the stone, a busy noise
By day, a quiet one in silent night.
(VI, 206)

The infant first feels this breath from his mother: "Such feelings passed into his torpid life/Like an awakening breeze, and hence his mind"

Is prompt and watchful, eager to combine
In one appearance all the elements
And parts of the same object, else detach'd
And loth to coalesce.
(VI, 26-27)

Thus, this breath shows the child the oneness of the empirical world.

Nature's breath is therefore another pedagog. In the episode of the stolen traps, the narrator hears the pursuing breath as he steals the objects from others' traps:

I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod."
(VI, 10)

This breath also makes itself known to the young narrator in times of solitude as "A respiration short and quick":

Thus musing, in a wood I sate me down,
Alone, continuing there to muse: meanwhile
The mountain heights were slowly overspread
With darkness, and before a rippling breeze
The long Lake lenghthen'd out its hoary line;
And in the shelter'd coppice where I sate,
Around me, from among the hazel leaves,
Now here, now there, stirr'd by the straggling
wind,
Came intermittingly a breath-like sound,
A respiration short and quick, which oft,
Yea, might I say, again and yet again,

> Mistaking for the panting of my Dog,
> The off and on Companion of my walk,
> I turn'd my head, to look if he were there.
> (VI, 57-58)

Furthermore, this breath speaks with a "voice": In the episode of the stolen boat, "the voice of mountain echoes" accompanies the education process (VI, 11). In the episode of the stolen raven eggs, "With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind/Blow through my ears" (VI, 10). And the "voice of waters" is heard from Nature's Soul on Mt. Snowdon (VI, 230).

This voice has a language: "The common face of Nature spake to me/Rememberable things" (VI, 18), and the "countenances" "of the ancient hills" have a "changeful language" (VI, 125). Again,

> I would stand,
> Beneath some rock, listening to sounds that are
> The ghostly language of the ancient earth,
> Or make their dim abode in distant winds.
> Thence did I drink the visionary power.
> (VI, 29)

Thus, in <u>The Prelude</u> Wordsworth concerns himself further with the subjective. He creates subjective counterparts for the empirical world when he describes the poet's mind in terms of picturesque light, movement, and space. Each one--the empirical and the subjective--acts on the other. For example, we have seen how light--brilliance and splendour--acts on the narrator's mind. In turn, the light of the young poet's mind acts on the landscape:

An auxiliar light
Came from my mind which on the setting sun
Bestow'd new splendor.
(VI, 30)

Thus, this inner light adds to what is already present to the eye. The poet's mind also augments shade: "And the midnight storm/Grew darker in the presence of my eye." Similarly, the young poet's mind can enhance motion and space:

The melodious birds,
The gentle breezes, fountains that ran on,
Murmuring so sweetly in themselves, obey'd
A like dominion. . . .
(VI, 31)

In turn, the motion of the poet's "thoughts" are motivated by landscape motion: "The changeful language of [the ancient hills]' countenances/Gives movement to the thoughts" (VI, 125). Furthermore, the wind-produced "commotion" stimulates the poet to write poetry:

The last Night's genial feeling overflow'd
Upon this morning, and my favourite grove,
Now tossing its dark boughs in sun and wind
Spreads through me a commotion like its own
Something that fits me for the Poet's task
Which we will now resume with chearful hope.
(VI, 106)

Thus, the life/breeze/breath of landscape Presence awakes a corresponding creative breeze in the poet:

For I, methought, while the sweet breath of Heaven
Was blowing on my body, felt within

> A corresponding mild creative breeze,
> A vital breeze which travell'd gently on
> O'er things which it had made, and is become
> A tempest, a redundant energy
> Vexing its own creation.
>
> (VI, 2)

The poet's utterance, then, is supposedly the counterpart of the voice and language of the landscape Presence:

> Oh! that I had a music and a voice,
> Harmonious as your own, that I might tell
> What ye have done for me.
>
> (VI, 206)

The poet hopes to relay the truths he has learned from Nature--"the language of the heavens" (VI, 225) and "things oracular":

> Of a new world that was fit
> To be transmitted and made visible
> to other eyes."
>
> (VI, 228)

The poet begs Nature that "An influx" be "Vouchsafed" to him that his work "might become/A power like one of Nature's" (VI, 226)--a new world of "excellence, pure spirit, and best power/Both of the object seen, and the eye that sees" (VI, 228).

The poet thus desires to be a prophet of Nature, and as a pedagog, his [Nature's] primary message is that the "mind of man" is more beautiful "than the earth" or the empirical world:

Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
A lasting inspiration, sanctified
By reason and by truth; what we have loved,
Others will love; and we may teach them how;
Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
On which he dwells, above this Frame of things
(Which, 'mid all revolution in the hopes
And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)
In beauty exalted, as it is itself
Of substance and of fabric more divine.
(VI, 241)

Another truth which the poet wishes to transmit is the oneness of man with man and the oneness of man with nature, as the following lesson of the poet to his audience illustrates:

And also, that among the multitudes
Of that great City, oftentimes was seen
Affectingly set forth, more than elsewhere
Is possible, the unity of man,
One spirit over ignorance and vice
Predominant, in good and evil hearts
One sense for moral judgements, as one eye
For the sun's light. When strongly breath'd upon
By this sensation, whencesoe'er it comes
Of union or communion doth the soul
Rejoice as in her highest joy: for there,
There chiefly, hath she feeling whence she is,
And passing through all Nature rests with God.
(VI, 148-149)

The counterpart of the Presence in the landscape then is the Genius and Godlike soul of the poet:

Of Genius, Power,
Creation and Divinity itself
I have been speaking, for my theme has been
What pass'd within me. . . .
. . . . . .
. . . for there's not a man
That lives who hath not had his godlike hours,

And knows not what majestic sway we have,
As natural beings in the strength of nature.
(VI, 39)

In the hierarchy of man, Nature, and God, man is a Genius or Power below Nature, which itself is below God:

[W]ithout knowing why
[I] Have felt his presence in his own domain,
As of a Lord and Master; or a Power
Or Genius, under Nature, under God,
Presiding.
(VI, 136)

Thus, Wordsworth superimposes God onto his structure. According to Wordsworth, God gives divinity and creativity to Nature and to Man:

Great God!
Who send'st thyself into this breathing world
Through nature and through every kind of life,
And mak'st man what he is, Creature divine.
(VI, 187)

Furthermore, the breath "passing through all Nature rests with God" and is therefore the means of communion or union between God, Nature, and the poet (VI, 149). In fact, "Nature's self . . . is the breath of God" (VI, 73). And the "immortal Soul" has "God-like power":

[I] had glimmering views
How Life pervades the undecaying mind,
How the immortal Soul with God-like power
Informs, creates, and thaws the deepest sleep
That time can lay upon her; how on earth,
Man, if he do but live within the light

Of high endeavours, daily spreads abroad
His being with a strength that cannot fail.
(VI, 57)

Wordsworth thus believes in the eternity of the Presence and of man's soul:

Hitherto
In progress through this Verse, my mind hath
look'd
Upon the speaking face of earth and heaven
As her prime Teacher, intercourse with man
Establish'd by the sovereign Intellect,
Who through that bodily Image hath diffus'd
A soul divine which we participate,
A deathless spirit.
(VI, 67)

If the empirical world should cease to exist, the Presence would still remain: "Should earth by inward throes be wrench'd throughout," "yet would the living Presence still subsist/Victorious" (VI, 67-68). Nevertheless, even though "higher minds" are "not enthrall'd" "By sensible impressions," of the empirical world, they commune with the non-empirical "invisible" world by means of these sensible impressions. Thus, the empirical world is necessary because it has an important function--to teach man of the non-empirical, "Invisible" world. By means of sense impressions, "higher minds" are "quicken'd" and "rouz'd":

and made thereby more apt
To hold communion with the invisible world.
Such minds are truly from the Deity,
For they are Powers.
(VI, 232)

Thus, Wordsworth has decided not to reject the empirical world and its light after all.

CHAPTER 6
THE PICTURESQUE OF THE MIND: *The Excursion* AND AFTER

Subjective Light

This chapter examines the subjective viewpoint of Wordsworth's visual picturesque in the later poems. Even though the visual picturesque and the associative picturesque are intimately associated in these poems, we can separate visual picturesque characteristics from associative picturesque ones. With the similes and metaphors in these poems, we are specifically in the realm of Alison's creative association.

The poems of 1814 and after collect all the picturesque elements found in the previous poems: brilliance, splendour, motion, calm, space, the non-empirical Presence, and even massing. However, Wordsworth now treats each element subjectively by bringing it from the external world into his Mind and then reflecting it back outwards in a deliberate formal trope, instead of describing passively what he perceives. For instance, he decorates moralistic similes and metaphors with brilliance and splendour and thus preserves the pedagogic function. Similarly, Wordsworth transforms splendour into a vision of heaven and the non-empirical Presence into the divine Presence. Aided by

divine splendour, the divine Presence then becomes a divine pedagog. Wordsworth thus closes the identity of the non-empirical Presence by equating it with God.

Wordsworth's metaphors and similes are examples of his subjective picturesque. Wordsworth's extended similes, in fact, seem to add an epic--and hence intellectual--tone to his humble theme. Motion, too, becomes the narrator's subjective, imagined motion through the landscape as he likens himself to a power of nature. Appropriately, space becomes the domain of the divine Presence, a Presence which the youthful narrator wishes to equal but painfully learns that he cannot. Even though Wordsworth emphasizes the superiority of the non-empirical, he never abandons the empirical world because it is the means by which we learn about the non-empirical, divine world. In Woelfflin's terms, the "picturesque" empirical world is the means by which we learn about the "painterly" empirical world and, for Wordsworth, the non-empirical world which lies beyond.

Wordsworth's 1814 picturesque subjectivity expresses itself in elaborate descriptions. For instance, in using a comparable scene from An Evening Walk to introduce The Excursion Wordsworth elaborates the former technique of massing:[1]

> 'Twas summer, and the sun had mounted high:
> Southward the landscape indistinctly glared
> Through a pale steam; but all the northern downs,
> In clearest air ascending, showed far off

> A surface dappled o'er with shadows flung
> From brooding clouds; shadows that lay in spots
> Determined and unmoved, with steady beams
> Of bright and pleasant sunshine interposed.
> (V, i, 7)

These eight lines almost repeat the following four lines of An Evening Walk:

> When, in the south, the wan noon brooding still,
> Breath'd a pale steam around the glaring hill,
> And shades of deep embattl'd clouds were seen
> Spotting the northern cliffs with lights between.
> (ll. 53-56)

Both scenes describe the Gilpinesque massing of northern "cliffs" or "downs" at noon "dappled" or "spot[ted]" with cloud shadows and a "pale steam" to the south, but the description from The Excursion is twice as long as that from An Evening Walk. The beginning of The Excursion similarly reflects the beginning of "Tintern Abbey." In "Tintern Abbey" the narrator merely sits "Under this dark sycamore," while in The Excursion the Sage lies "Supine" in the shade of a tree, "The shadows of the breezy elms above/Dappling his face" (V, i, 23). Here, again, The Excursion takes twice as many words to say the same thing.

Wordsworth returns to massing to describe childhood, this time in elaborate scenes. Unlike the direct observations of childhood in Lyrical Ballads, these long descriptions suggest the pains-taking composition of remembered details. For instance, the former simplicity of "Anecdote for Fathers"--told in a child's idiom--now becomes the Skeptic's complex reminiscence of his youth:

> Whence unmolested wanderers, we beheld
> The shining giver of the day diffuse
> His brightness o'er a tract of sea and land
> Gay as our spirits, free as our desires;
> As our enjoyments, boundless.--From those heights
> We dropped, at pleasure, into sylvan combs;
> Where arbours of impenetrable shade,
> And mossy seats, detained us side by side,
> With hearts at ease, and knowledge in our hearts
> That all the grove and all the day was ours."
> (V, iii, 92)

"Sunshine" has now become "The shining giver of the day diffuse[s]/His brightness o'er a tract of sea and land." Similarly, "shade" has become "arbours of impenetrable shade."

The maypole dance is another complex picture of rural childhood described with massing:

> --Beyond the limits of the shadow cast
> By the broad hill, glistened upon our sight
> That gay assemblage. Round them and above,
> Glitter, with dark recesses interposed,
> Casement, and cottage-roof, and stems of trees
> Half-veiled in vapoury cloud, the silver steam
> Of dews fast melting on their leafy boughs
> By the strong sunbeams smitten. Like a mast
> Of gold, the Maypole shines; as if the rays
> Of morning, aided by exhaling dew,
> With gladsome influence could re-animate
> The faded garlands dangling from its sides.
> (V, ii, 46)

Masses of hill shadow and sunlit plain repeat masses of reflected light--from window casements, roof, tree trunks, branches, and Maypole--broken by "dark recesses" of uneven projections, intermittently shaded even further--"half-veiled"--by "vapoury cloud."

Frequently, however, Wordsworth's picturesque contrast seems mechanical or padded, as in the following scenes from "Home at Grasmere":

> "What would ye," said the shower,
> "Wild Wanderers, whither through my dark domain?"
> The sunbeam said, "be happy." When this Vale
> We entered, bright and solemn was the sky
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . Daylight failed
> Insensibly, and round us gently fell
> Composing darkness,
> (V, 319-320)

Similar passages, such as "Mount slowly, sun! that we may journey long,/By this dark hill protected from thy beams!" (V, i, 45), are tedious and occur frequently in The Excursion.

As in 1800, some scenes feature only light, but now they are more elaborate:

> --How vast the compass of this theatre,
> Yet nothing to be seen but lovely pomp
> And silent majesty; the birch-tree woods
> Are hung with thousand thousand diamond drops
> Of melted hoar-frost, every tiny knot
> In the bare twigs, each little budding-place
> Case with its several bead, what myriads there
> Upon one tree, while all the distant grove
> That rises to the summit of the steep
> Shows like a mountain built of silver light.
> See yonder the same pageant, and again
> Behold the universal imagery
> Inverted, all its sun-bright features touched
> As with the varnish, and the gloss of dreams.
> (V, 332)

In this excerpt from "Home at Grasmere" Wordsworth multiplies the light mathematically--a "thousand thousand diamond drops"--"like a mountain built of silver light," all

of which is doubled in its reflection. In another scene, brilliance seems to exist for its own sake:

> They tempt the sun to sport among their plumes;
> Tempt the smooth water, or the gleaming ice,
> To shew them a fair image,--'tis themselves,
> Their own fair forms, upon the glimmering plain,
> Painted more soft and fair as they descend,
> Almost to touch;--then up again aloft,
> Up with a sally, and a flash of speed,
> As if they scorned both resting-place and rest!
> (V, 321)

As these excerpts illustrate, Wordsworth is no longer trying to picture a scene economically as he did in earlier poetry. Instead, he seems to be trying to load a scene with visual detail for a rich, mannerist effect. In fact, Wordsworth frequently uses picturesque terminology when referring to these scenes. For instance, the swan scene's picture-like quality emerges as "its sun-bright features" are "touched/As with the varnish, and the gloss of dreams." In another passage he points out picturesque indistinctness of line as a mist clears and reveals parts of the landscape:

> [W]hen low-hung mists
> Break up, and are beginning to recede;
> How pleased he is where thin and thinner grows
> The veil, or where it parts at once, to spy
> The dark pines thrusting forth their spiky heads
> To watch the spreading lawns with cattle grazed,
> Then to be greeted by the scattered huts,
> As they shine out; and <u>see</u> the streams whose murmur
> Had soothed his ear while they were hidden.
> (V, 329)

Here we notice that the active verb "spy" replaces the passive entrance of a scene into the mind and thus

emphasizes the "painterly" instead of the "picturesque" emphasis.

In another malerisch reference, Wordsworth describes indistinctness--"Something" "concealed from view," then "visible, "Half-seen or wholly, lost and found again." :

> [H]ow pleased
> To have about him, which way e'er he goes,
> Something on every side concealed from view,
> In every quarter something visible,
> Half-seen or wholly, lost and found again,
> Alternate progress and impediment,
> And yet a growing prospect in the main.
> (V, 329)

This picturesque indistinctness produces characteristic picturesque movement--"Alternate progress and impediment."

Using an indistinct shore line and reflections, Wordsworth describes the painterly sense of non-corporeal space which emerges from indistinct boundaries:

> Dreamlike the blending also of the whole
> Harmonious landscape; all along the shore
> The boundary lost, the line invisible
> That parts the image from reality.
> (V, 332)

Wordsworth also describes splendour's erased twilight distinctions in "Hail, Twilight":

> Hail, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful hour!
> Not dull art Thou as undiscerning Night;
> But studious only to remove from sight
> Day's mutable distinctions.
> (III, 31)

In "Aerial Rock" (1827), Wordsworth even adds a Gilpinesque castle--with its catching sunset light--to a mountain:

> --By planting on thy naked head the crest
> Of an imperial Castle, which the plough
> Of ruin shall not touch. Innocent scheme!
> That doth presume no more than to supply
> A grace the sinuous vale and roaring stream
> Want, through neglect of hoar Antiquity.
> Rise, then, yet votive Towers! and catch a gleam
> Of golden sunset, ere it fade and die.
> (III, 7)

The picturesque prospect in "The White Doe of Rylestone" (1815) features predominating darkness enlivened by brilliance with its "dark moor, and gleam of pool and stream":

> High on a point of rugged ground
> Among the wastes of Rylstone Fell,
> Above the loftiest ridge or mound
> Where foresters or shepherds dwell,
> An edifice of warlike frame
> Stands single--Norton Tower its name--
> It fronts all quarters, and looks round
> O'er path and road, and plain and dell,
> Dark moor, and gleam of pool and stream,
> Upon a prospect without bound.
> (III, 318)

Still using the language of painting, the narrator claims that neither the word nor the "pencil" [read paint brush] can portray adequately the movement of varying light:

> Cultured slopes,
> Wild tracts of forest-ground, and scattered groves,
> And mountains bare, or clothed with ancient woods,

Surrounded us; and, as we held our way
Along the level of the glassy flood,
They ceased not to surround us; change of place,
From kindred features diversely combined,
Producing change of beauty ever new.
--Ah! that such beauty, varying in the light
Of living nature, cannot be portrayed
By words, nor by the pencil's silent skill;
But is the property of him alone
Who hath beheld it, noted it with care,
And in his mind recorded it with love!
(V, ix, 303)

Subjective Brilliance

Brilliance continues to function as a pedagog--attracting attention and stimulating curiosity. This brilliance in 1814, however, frequently ornaments a moral tale. For instance, to excite the reader's curiosity, the narrator begins the Skeptic's moral tale with a description of a "glittering stream":

--So we descend: and winding round a rock
Attain a point that showed the valley--stretched
In length before us; and, not distant far,
Upon a rising ground a grey church-tower,
Whose battlements were screened by tufted trees.
And towards a crystal Mere, that lay beyond
Among steep hills and woods embosomed, flowed
A copius stream with boldly-winding course;
Here traceable, there hidden--there again
To sight restored, and glittering in the sun.
(V, v, 156)

This winding, glittering stream seems to hypnotize the audience to receive the moral tale which follows. Picturesquely indistinct line is again evident in the words

"screened by tufted trees," "embosomed," and "Here traceable, there hidden--there again/To sight restored."

In the moral tale of the virtuous mountain couple, the Pastor first points out their dwelling, flashing its attention-getting brilliance--"a shining speck/Bright as a sunbeam"--against "the breast of yon dark mountain," itself an example of predominating shade:

> High on the breast of yon dark mountain, dark
> With stony barrenness, a shining speck
> Bright as a sunbeam sleeping till a shower
> Brush it away, or cloud pass over it;
> And such it might be deemed--a sleeping sunbeam;
> But 'tis a plot of cultivated ground,
> Cut off, an island in the dusky waste;
> And that attractive brightness is its own.
> (V, v, 174)

Brilliance, then, which taught nature's morality to the young poet, now teaches conventional morality to skeptics. Splendour also continues its pedagogic function as a teacher of love. In his youth, the Sage witnessed love for the sun in the "faces" of the sun-bathed ocean, earth, and clouds:

> Such was the Boy--but for the growing Youth
> What soul was his, when, from the naked top
> Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun
> Rise up, and bathe the world in light! He looked--
> Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
> And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay
> Beneath him:--Far and wide the clouds were touched,
> And in their silent faces could he read
> Unutterable love.
> (V, i, 14-15)

The sun's love is then reflected metaphorically in the hearts of the dalesmen:

How gay the habitations that bedeck
This fertile valley! Not a house but seems
To give assurance of content within;
Embosomed happiness, and placid love;
As if the sunshine of the day were met
With answering brightness in the hearts of all
Who walk this favoured ground.
(V, v, 166)

On a more personal level in "Home at Grasmere," Wordsworth describes the mutual love between his loved ones and himself in terms of personal splendour:

[Y]et to me I feel
That an internal brightness is vouchsafed
That must not die, that must not pass away.
Why does this inward lustre fondly seek,
And gladly blend with outward fellowship"
Why do they shine around me whom I love?
Why do they teach me whom I thus revere?
(V, 335-336)

And in "Evening Voluntaries: On a High Part of the Coast of Cumberland," sunset splendour makes the poet think of love:

The Sun, that seemed so mildly to retire,
Flung back from distant climes a streaming fire,
Whose blaze is now subdued to tender gleams,
Prelude of Night's approach with soothing dreams.
Look round;--of all the clouds not one is moving:
'Tis the still hour of thinking, feeling, loving.
(IV, 2)

Wordsworth indicates splendour's pedagogic function in the following passage, where splendour "admonished" the narrator and the Sage:

Ere long the sun declining shot
A slant and mellow radiance, which began

To fall upon us, while, beneath the trees,
We sate on that low bench: and now we felt
Admonished thus, the sweet hour coming on.
(V, i, 39-40)

I would like to mention here that in "Home at Grasmere" Wordsworth honors his sister as a combination of pedagog, Presence, and genius of the place. As a pedagog she is associated with picturesque light; as a Presence, she is associated with breath, Voice, and "unseen companionship," as with a genius of the place:

Where'er my footsteps turned,
Her Voice was like a hidden Bird that sang,
The thought of her was like a flash of light,
Or an unseen companionship, a breath,
Or fragrance independent of the wind.
(V, 316)

As the previous excerpts indicate, splendour teaches love for both the empirical world and for one's fellow man. These lessons culminate in the love between poet and "God." Where splendour had previously revealed to the poet of The Prelude that he was "an enlightened spirit," now splendour reveals to the Sage the ultimate "still communion" with "the living God":

. . . Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle: sensation, soul, and form,
All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live; they were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.

> No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
> Rapt into still communion that transcends
> The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
> His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
> That made him; it is blessedness and love!
> (V, i, 15)

In this communion, in the fullest sense of the word, the empirical and non-empirical fuse: "[the Sage's] spirit drank/The spectacle" and "they swallowed up/His animal being." "Sensation, soul, and form,/All melted into him" as observer and observed fuse into the ultimate union. In other words, in this loving union with "the living God," the observer totally integrates himself into the landscape.

Wordsworth also associates splendour with traditional learning. In The Prelude Wordsworth associated brilliance and the young poet's book learning. Now Wordsworth associates splendour and the young poet's learning from bards:

> While thus from theme to theme the Historian passed,
> The words he uttered, and the scene that lay
> Before our eyes, awakened in my mind
> Vivid remembrance of those long-past hours;
> When, in the hollow of some shadowy vale,
> (What time the splendour of the setting sun
> Lay beautiful on Snowdon's sovereign brow,
> On Cader Idris, or huge Penmanmaur)
> A wandering Youth, I listened with delight
> To pastoral melody or warlike air,
> Drawn from the chords of the ancient British harp
> By some accomplished Master.
> (V, vii, 230-231)

Wordsworth repeats the association of brilliance and book learning from The Prelude when the Sage disqualifies

Voltaire as a moral guide: "'You have known lights and guides better than these'" (V, iv, 141).

Divine Splendour

We have seen how Wordsworth has added a spiritual dimension to the pedagogy of splendour. Pedagogy is now primarily associated with "sacred influence" and thus leads the adult to sacred knowledge. Splendour becomes "Soul-cheering Light" and a "mysterious comforter":

> "Soul-cheering Light, most bountiful of things!
> Guide of our way, mysterious comforter!
> Whose sacred influence, [is] spread through earth
> and heaven.
> (V, vii, 246)

Thus, as a pedagog, splendour shows to "frail Mortality" not "What is" but "What can be." Going a step further, Wordsworth connects splendour with heaven and heavenly beings. In "Composed upon an Evening of Extraordinary Splendour and Beauty," Wordsworth associates splendour's empirical "gleam" with the non-empirical "vespers" of "fervent angels":

> [The vespers of fervent angels] could not move
> Sublimer transport, purer love,
> Than does this silent spectacle--the gleam--
> The shadow--and the peace supreme.
> (IV, 10-11)

(Note that Wordsworth provides the "gleam" with a contrasting "shadow.") Wordsworth makes similar heavenly

associations in "To--On Her First Ascent to the Summit of Helvellyn": shadows are "solemn," "glistenings" are "heavenly fair," and sunset-reflecting clouds have "purple pinions":

> Lo! the clouds, the solemn shadows,
> And the glistenings--heavenly fair!
> . . . . . .
> Or survey their bright dominions
> In the gorgeous colours drest
> Flung from off the purple pinions,
> Evening spreads throughout the west!
> (II, 286)

In particularly blatant subjectivity, Wordsworth superimposes a vision of St. George onto an elaborate dream landscape replete with picturesque features in "Ode: The Morning of the Day Appointed for a General Thanksgiving, 1816." However, Wordsworth's listing of details produces what Gilpin might call "a painted survey, a mere map" ("On Landscape Painting," l. 231). Wordsworth:

> When the soft hand of sleep had closed the latch
> On the tired household of corporeal sense,
> And Fancy, keeping unreluctant watch,
> Was free her choicest favours to dispense;
> I saw, in wondrous perspective displayed,
> A landscape more august than happiest skill
> Of pencil ever clothed with light and shade;
> An intermingled pomp of vale and hill,
> City, and naval stream, suburban grove,
> And stately forest where the wild deer rove;
> Nor wanted lurking hamlet, dusky towns,
> And scattered rural farms of aspect bright;
> And, here and there, between the pastoral downs,
> The azure sea upswelled upon the sight.
> Fair prospect, such as Britain only shows!
> But not a living creature could be seen
> Through its wide circuit, that, in deep repose,

> And, even to sadness, lonely and serene,
> Lay hushed; till--through a portal in the sky
> Brighter than brightest loop-hole, in a storm,
> Issued, to sudden view, a glorious Form!
> Earthward it glided with a swift descent:
> Saint George himself this Visitant must be.
> (III, 143)

This atypical exaggeration may be attributed to the patriotic occasion, as its title suggests. More typically, in "Miscellaneous Sonnets: XLIII," the "calm Heaven" seems to disclose "Gleams from a world in which the saints repose":

> If the calm Heaven, now to its zenith decked
> With glorious forms in numberless array,
> To the lone shepherd on the hills disclose
> Gleams from a world in which the saints repose.
> (III, 60)

Even the The Excursion's Skeptic associates the splendour of sunset with "the revealed abode/Of Spirits in beatitude":

> The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
> Was of a mighty city . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> Far sinking into splendour--without end!
> . . . . . .
> By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
> Upon the dark materials of the storm
> Now pacified . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald turf,
> Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
> Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
> Molten together . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> This little Vale, a dwelling-place of Man,
> Lay low beneath my feet; 'twas visible--
> I saw not, but I felt that it was there.

> That which I saw was the revealed abode
> Of Spirits in beatitude. . . .
>
> (V, ii, 72-73)

This vision of heaven optimistically replaces the "faithless" light of Wordsworth's youth. Appropriately, in a new sunset boat scene, no one complains of "faithless" light. Instead, the light reflects from a benign, "silvery lake streaked with placid blue":

> [the Parson's wife] said,
> "Behold the shades of afternoon have fallen
> Upon this flowery slope; and see--beyond--
> The silvery lake is streaked with placid blue;
> As if preparing for the peace of evening.
> How temptingly the landscape shines! The air
> Breathes invitation; easy is the walk
> To the lake's margin, where a boat lies moored
> Under a sheltering tree."
>
> (V, ix, 300)

Like the "beguiling" "water's breast" of 1798, the "landscape"--"silvery lake"--"shines" "temptingly." But unlike the "following gloom" of 1798, the evening darkness brings "the peace of evening." Furthermore, the narrator speaks of "celestial splendours" instead of "faithless light," and the shadows bring "inferior lights" instead of "gloom":

> This vesper-service closed, without delay
> From that exalted station to the plain
> Descending, we pursued our homeward course,
> In mute composure, o'er the shadowy lake,
> Under a faded sky. No trace remained
> Of those celestial splendours; grey the vault--
> Pure, cloudless, ether; and the star of eve
> Was wanting; but inferior lights appeared

> Faintly, too faint almost for sight; and some
> Above the darkened hills stood boldly forth
> In twinkling lustre, ere the boat attained
> Her mooring-place. . . .
> (V, ix, 311)

In all points of comparison, the narrator substitutes the positive--peace, celestial splendours, and inferior lights--for the negative--faithless light and gloom. The older narrator of "Home at Grasmere" contradicts the 1798 mood of "gloom" which remained after light had vanished. Instead, he says that he did not fear darkness but went to meet it as a new experience--as a "darkness to be explored" (V, 337). Furthermore, in words which, I suggest, refer to the transposition of the "vision of heaven" for "faithless" light," the older narrator writes that "All that inflamed [his] infant heart" "shall survive." This includes "the love,/The longing, the contempt, [and] the undaunted quest," all of which sum up the frustration expressed in the 1798 boat scene's "faithless" light. Accordingly, his youthful frustration was "changed" in "office," i.e., transformed into a new, positive outlook--the "vision of heaven":

> All that inflamed thy infant heart, the love,
> The longing, the contempt, the undaunted quest,
> All shall survive--though changed their office, all
> Shall live,--it is not in their power to die.
> (V, 337)

In retrospect, the older narrator judges his former youthful condition as one of "wild appetites," "blind desires," and "motions of savage instinct" (V, 336). He thus implies that

his mature condition, the condition which allows him to see "celestial splendours" instead of a "faithless gleam," is superior because it is enlightened and civilized. The mature narrator then substitutes a dying beach fire for the lost, lamented "faithless" light. He now associates this fire with "Mortal joys," and the poet thus rejects what he formerly yearned for:

> The fire, that burned so brightly to our wish,
> Where is it now?--Deserted on the beach--
> Dying, or dead! Nor shall the fanning breeze
> Revive its ashes. What care we for this,
> Whose ends are gained? Behold an emblem here
> Of one day's pleasure, and all mortal joys!
> (V, ix, 304)

The "pleasure" of youth is thus "deserted on the beach." This transformation of light from a picturesque description of twilight to an "emblem" of a dying beach fire illustrates how Wordsworth's interest has passed from objective to subjective landscape. To use Wordsworth's terms, the "light of setting suns" has moved into the "Mind," and the mind uses this light for its own purposes.

Another substitute for "Faithless" light is "the visionary gleam" and "the light that never was on sea or land,/The consecration, and the Poet's dream" of 1802-09. I think Wordsworth created the "visionary" gleam in retrospect when he wrote the "Ode: Intimations" and "Elegaic Stanzas: VI." Writing in 1802-09 about his youth he claims that he saw visionary splendours. Yet the word "visionary" does not appear in 1793, or in 1798. Only in 1802-09 do we hear of it. Instead, the lights and gleams, which produced the

youth's "aching joys" and "dizzy raptures," seemed to fail him at an early stage in his life. I claim that the older narrator in retrospect replaced the sensual, visual splendour of his youth with subjective, quasi-divine splendour. Yet, in "Composed upon an Evening of Extraordinary Splendour and Beauty," Wordsworth claims he has recovered his lost youthful "visionary splendour." However, I suggest that we read this subjective "visionary splendour" of sunset as the narrator's resurrection of youthful, sensuous "faithless light":

> Such hues from their celestial Urn
> Were wont to stream before mine eye,
> Where'er it wandered in the morn
> Of blissful infancy.
> This glimpse of glory, why renewed?
> . . . . . .
> Oh, let Thy grace [Dread Power] remind me of the light
> Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored;
> Which, at this moment, on my waking sight
> Appears to shine, by miracle restored;
> My soul, though yet confined to earth,
> Rejoices in a second birth!
> (IV, 12-13)

Thus, Wordsworth replaces his youthful sensuous pleasure with intellectual or spiritual pleasure. Continuing his subjective description, the poet describes sunlit flocks, "called forth by" "beamy radiance," which parallel the more objectively described flocks from <u>An Evening Walk</u> and <u>The Prelude</u>:

Far-distant images draw nigh,
Called forth by wondrous potency
Of beamy radiance, that imbues
Whate'er it strikes with gem-like hues!
In vision exquisitely clear,
Herds range along the mountain side;
And glistening antlers are descried;
And gilded flocks appear.
(IV, 11)

Thus, instead of trying to avoid the pleasure of the empirical world as he did in 1802-09, the narrator imbues it with a subjective, transcendent element. Instead of seeing a purely empirical splendour, the narrator now sees a combination of the empirical--"purpureal Eve"--and the non-empirical--"worlds not quickened by the sun":

Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal Eve!
But long as god-like wish, or hope divine,
Informs my spirit, ne'er can I believe
That this magnificence is wholly thine!
--From worlds not quickened by the sun
A portion of the gift is won;
An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread
On grounds which British shepherds tread!
(IV, 11)

Consequently, the narrator sees empirical clouds which seem to lead to his mentally created heaven beyond:

Yon hazy ridges to their eyes
Present a glorious scale,
Climbing suffused with sunny air,
To stop--no record hath told where!
And tempting Fancy to ascend,
And with immortal Spirits blend!
--Wings at my shoulders seem to play;
But, rooted here, I stand and gaze

> On those bright steps that heavenward raise
> Their practicable way.
> (IV, 11-12)

"Ecclesiastical Sonnets: XLVI" summarizes the subjective splendour which the narrator has superimposed onto empirical splendour:

> Earth prompts--Heaven urges; let us seek the light,
> Studious of that pure intercourse begun
> When first our infant brows their lustre won;
> So, like the Mountain, may we grow more bright
> From unimpeded commerce with the Sun,
> At the approach of all-involving night.
> (III, 406)

As in the sunset boat scene, this vision fades and is followed by night's shadows, for which Wordsworth's new spiritual context suggests spiritual associations: "--'Tis past, the visionary splendour fades;/And night approaches with her shades" (IV, 13).

The narrator integrates this subjective, divine world with the empirical world Wordsworth has described in previous poetry by explaining that the divine, "visionary" splendour teaches spiritual knowledge in the same way that empirical splendour teaches natural morality. For example, in <u>The Excursion</u> the Sage explains that "visionary" splendour had filled his "soul" with "bliss" and "holiest love" in the same way as "light" filled "earth, sea, [and] air" with "pomp," "glory," and "magnificence":

> If the dear faculty of sight should fail,
> Still, it may be allowed me to remember
> What visionary powers of eye and soul
> In youth were mine; when, stationed on the top
> Of some huge hill--expectant, I beheld
> The sun rise up, from distant climes returned
> Darkness to chase, and sleep; and bring the day
> His bounteous gift! or saw him toward the deep
> Sink, with a retinue of flaming clouds
> Attended; then, my spirit was entranced
> With joy exalted to beatitude;
> The measure of my soul was filled with bliss,
> And holiest love; as earth, sea, air, with light,
> With pomp, with glory, with magnificence!
> (V, iv, 113)

Here, the splendour which filled the soul with "holiest love" and "entranced" the "Spirit" "With joy exalted to beatitude" reminds us of The Prelude's splendour which taught the narrator about love and revealed that he was "A dedicated Spirit" (VI, 62). As we have seen, the seeds of this holiness existed in The Prelude. Finally, instead of denying sensuous pleasure as did its "faithless light" counterpart, "visionary" splendour provides emotional relief. In "Miscellaneous Sonnets: XLII" Wansfell's "visionary majesties of light" "shone" "to elevate our spirits," and "our hearts found rest" "in [its] pensive glooms" (III, 60).

The Sun as Source of Empirical and Divine Light

Wordsworth thus has superimposed the subjective picturesque onto his objective picturesque foundation. Simultaneously, he has replaced the pessimism of "faithless light" with the optimism of Heaven's "visionary splendour."

The source of this "visionary" splendour is the sun--the "Divinest Object which the uplifted eye/Of mortal man is suffered to behold" ("Ode: The Morning of the Day Appointed for a General Thanksgiving," III, 156). In "Home at Grasmere" the narrator invokes this "dread Power" "Whose gracious favour is the primal source/Of all illumination" (V, 6). Wordsworth then attempts closure of his "visionary" splendour with Heaven and God. Like the sun, God makes the empirical world "shine" "with purpureal flame" like a "human tabernacle":

> Glory to God! and to the Power who came
> In filial duty, clothed with love divine,
> That made His human tabernacle shine
> Like Ocean burning with purpureal flame.
> (III, 406)

When he describes a Godlike sunset, Wordsworth's Sage now focuses primarily on atmospheric light and not on the sunlit earth. If we compare the following sunset to that in Descriptive Sketches, we notice the emphasis on the atmospheric splendour and not on the mountains which receive that light:

> Already had the sun,
> Sinking with less than ordinary state,
> Attained his western bound; but rays of light--
> Now suddenly diverging from the orb
> Retired behind the mountain-tops or veiled
> By the dense air--shot upwards to the crown
> Of the blue firmament--aloft, and wide:
> And multitudes of little floating clouds,
> Through their ethereal texture pierced--ere we,
> Who saw, of change were conscious--had become

> Vivid as fire; clouds separately poised,--
> Innumerable multitude of forms
> Scattered through half the circle of the sky;
> And giving back, and shedding each on each,
> With prodigal communion, the bright hues
> Which from the unapparent fount of glory
> They had imbibed, and ceased not to receive.
> That which the heavens displayed, the liquid deep
> Repeated; but with unity sublime!
> While from the grassy mountain's open side
> We gazed, in silence hushed, with eyes intent
> On the refulgent spectacle, diffused
> Through earth, sky, water, and all visible space,
> The Priest in holy transport thus exclaimed:
> "Eternal Spirit! universal God!"
> (V, ix, 306-307)

Instead of "a mighty crucible" "glowing hot, like coals of fire," the observers view "the refulgent spectacle, diffused/Through earth, sky, water, and all visible space." What had been the "Sun walking on his western field" is now the "Eternal Spirit." In other words, Wordsworth has replaced the empirical with the non-empirical and the anthropomorphic god with a Spirit. Thus, Wordsworth's 1793 personification of the sun becomes "invisible" in 1814 as it leaves a "pomp" and "yellow radiance":

> The Sun, before his place of rest were reached,
> Had yet to travel far, but unto us,
> To us who stood low in that hollow dell,
> He had become invisible,--a pomp
> Leaving behind of yellow radiance spread
> Over the mountain-sides, in contrast bold
> With ample shadows, seemingly, no less
> Than those resplendent lights, his rich bequest;
> A dispensation of his evening power.
> (V, iv, 150-151)

Splendour has become an "effluence" of God and a "local transitory type/Of [God's] paternal splendours." "Effulgence" belongs to the "the radiant Cherubim" and the

"faint reflections . . . of [God's] face." In other words, the Sage imagines splendour to be the means by which this "Spirit" or "God" "deigns" to make himself "intelligible to man":

> [F]or this effluence of thyself,
> To the infirmity of mortal sense
> Vouchsafed; this local transitory type
> Of thy paternal splendours, and the pomp
> Of those who fill thy courts in highest heaven,
> The radiant Cherubim;--accept the thanks
> Which we, thy humble Creatures, here convened,
> Presume to offer; we, who--from the breast
> Of the frail earth, permitted to behold
> The faint reflections only of thy face--
> Are yet exalted, and in soul adore!
> (V, ix, 307)

As a type of the divine, the sun is associated with other spiritual beings. In "Vernal Ode" another spiritual being's face resembles the sun:

> The form and rich habiliments of One [appeared]
> Whose countenance bore resemblance to the sun,
> When it reveals, in evening majesty,
> Features half lost amid their own pure light.
> Poised like a weary cloud, in middle air
> He hung,--then floated with angelic ease
> (Softening that bright effulgence by degrees)
> Till he had reached a summit sharp and bare,
> Where oft the venturous heifer drinks the noontide breeze.
> Upon the apex of that lofty cone
> Alighted, there the Stranger stood alone;
> Fair as a gorgeous Fabric of the east
> Suddenly raised by some enchanter's power,
> Where nothing was.
> (II, 308)

Wordsworth then gives this Miltonic being angelic wings and a harp: "Beneath the shadow of his purple wings/Rested a golden harp." This being then sings of his transcendental

"native habitations" which are "Buried in glory, far beyond the scope/Of man's inquiring gaze." These regions, then, are "to his hope/Imaged," optimistically though faintly, in the "hue/Profound of night's ethereal blue" (II, 309).

Wordsworth explains that this supernatural being must be seen not with the physical eye, but with "the spiritual eye/That aids or supersedes our grosser sight." Appropriately, Wordsworth admits that this subjective creation was "raised by some enchanter's power,/Where nothing was" (II, 308). Wordsworth has thus grafted onto an empirical sunset a subjective absolute as he moves from objective descriptions of sunset to subjective ones.

The Landscape of the Mind

As Wordsworth promised to do in "Home at Grasmere," he brings picturesque landscape into the Mind. First, he describes the inner man in terms of light, and then he adds picturesque light stored in his Mind to what he objectively sees. For example, he writes that the Sage's "mind was filled with inward light" (V, i, 110) and that "The particle divine" "remained unquenched" within him (V, iv, 111). He also describes the Skeptic in terms of an inner light: "Vivid was the light/That flashed and sparkled from the other's eyes;/He was all fire: no shadow on his brow/Remained" (V, ii, 60). The Skeptic, in turn, describes the handy-man in terms of light:

> Beside a fire whose genial warmth seemed met
> By a faint shining from the heart, a gleam
> Of comfort, spread over his pallid face.
> (V, ii, 73)

Similarly, the Sage speaks of the soul in terms of "native brightness":

> Within the soul a faculty abides,
> That with interpositions, which would hide
> And darken, so can deal that they become
> Contingencies of pomp; and serve to exalt
> Her native brightness. As the ample moon,
> In the deep stillness of a summer even
> Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
> Burns like an unconsuming fire of light,
> In the green trees; and, kindling on all sides
> Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
> Into a substance glorious as her own,
> Yea, with her own incorporated, by power
> Capacious and serene. Like power abides
> In man's celestial spirit; virtue thus
> Sets forth and magnifies herself; thus feeds
> A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
> From the encumbrances of mortal life,
> From error, disappointment--nay, from guilt
> And sometimes, so relenting justice wills,
> From palpable oppressions of despair.
> (V, iv, 142-143)

Like Plato's model of vision--light entering the eye as truth and light leaving the eye as reason--Wordsworth's model of poetic creation involves empirical light entering the mind and creative light leaving the mind.[2] The light of the exterior world enters Wordsworth's mind and illuminates it. The mind then casts its creative light back onto the exterior world. Consequently, the mind contains an interior landscape. Wordsworth describes the mind in picturesque metaphor. Like light and shade in an exterior landscape, "beams of light" "dart" into the "damp and gloom/Of the gay

mind" of Wordsworth's inner landscape:

> Since that day forth the place to him--<u>to me</u>
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . became
> As beautiful to thought, as it had been,
> When present, to the bodily sense; a haunt
> Of pure affections, shedding upon joy
> A brighter joy; and through such damp and gloom
> Of the gay mind, as ofttimes splenetic Youth
> Mistakes for sorrow, darting beams of light
> That no self-cherished sadness could withstand.
> (V, 314)

Conversely, the Skeptic describes his creative mind as a light shining outwards onto the world:

> [W]hen, having gained the top
> Of some commanding eminence, which yet
> Intruder ne'er beheld, he thence surveys
> Regions of wood and wide savannah, vast
> Expanse of unappropriated earth,
> With mind that sheds a light on what he sees;
> Free as the sun, and lonely as the sun,
> Pouring above his head its radiance down
> Upon a living and rejoicing world!
> (V, iii, 107)

Thus, Wordsworth describes the mind receiving and then reflecting the empirical world. For example, the Skeptic describes himself in the metaphor of a "mountain brook" reflecting the surrounding world before dashing on:

> The tenour
> Which my life holds, he readily may conceive
> Whoe'er hath stood to watch a mountain brook
> In some still passage of its course, and seen,
> Within the depths of its capacious breast,
> Inverted trees, rocks, clouds, and azure sky;
> And, on its glassy surface, specks of foam,

And conglobated bubbles undissolved,
Numerous as stars.
(V, iii, 108)

The poet gives his reflections back to the outside world. This outward reflection occurs as the poetic mind casts metaphorical light into the hearts of others and illuminates them as in an underwood:

"Thus sanctioned,"
The Pastor said, "I willingly confine
My narratives to subjects that excite
Feelings with these accordant; love, esteem
And admiration; lifting up a veil,
A sunbeam introducing among hearts
Retired and covert; so that ye shall have
Clear images before your gladdened eyes
Of nature's unambitious underwood,
And flowers that prosper in the shade."
(V, vi, 206-207)

The Parson's wife explains the Sage's poetic reflections:

[I]n what vivid hues
His mind gives back the various forms of things,
Caught in their fairest, happiest, attitude!
(V, ix, 301)

Like a reflection, the beauty reflected by these words vanishes with them:

While he is speaking, I have power to see
Even as he sees; but when his voice hath ceased,
Then, with a sigh, sometimes I feel, as now,
That combinations so serene and bright
Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
Whose highest beauty, beautiful as it is,
Like that reflected in yon quiet pool,

Seems but a fleeting sunbeam's gift, whose peace
The sufferance only of a breath of air!
(V, ix, 301)

The narrator in "Home at Grasmere" affirms that poetic creation occurs by means of "reflexion": "The more I see the more delight my mind/Receives, or by reflexion can create" (V, 330). In The Excursion Wordsworth manifests his Mind's "reflexion," or reflection, of the exterior world in a series of picturesque similes and metaphors. The poet thus transfers the pedagogic function of brilliance and splendour to his moral tales, which he decorates with brilliance- and splendour-containing similes and metaphors. In one simile, the Pastor describes a handsome youth as a "Mountain-ash" which "brightened" "all the gloomy rocks" "round her":

The Mountain-ash
No eye can overlook, when 'mid a grove
Of yet unfaded trees she lifts her head
Decked with autumnal berries, that outshine
Spring's richest blossoms; and ye may have marked,
By a brook-side or solitary tarn,
How she her station doth adorn: the pool
Glows at her feet, and all the gloomy rocks
Are brightened round her. In his native vale
Such and so glorious did this Youth appear;
A sight that kindled pleasure in all hearts
By his ingenuous beauty, by the gleam
Of his fair eyes.
(V, vii, 254)

In another moral vignette, the Pastor contrasts a "passionate" pastor and his more spiritual wife in terms of an "inconstant" setting sun and "a soft attendant cloud":

Him might we liken to the setting sun
As seen not seldom on some gusty day,
Struggling and bold, and shining from the west
With an inconstant and unmellowed light
She was a soft attendant cloud, that hung
As if with wish to veil the restless orb;
From which it did itself imbibe a ray
Of pleasing lustre.
(V, vii, 238)

Again in picturesque simile, the Pastor describes his death:

Like a shadow thrown
Softly and lightly from a passing cloud,
Death fell upon him, while reclined he lay
For noontide solace on the summer grass,
The warm lap of his mother earth.
(V, vii, 240)

In a simile of Victorian progress, the Sage speaks of new highways in picturesque metaphor:

[The dirt roads]
Have vanished--swallowed up by stately roads
Easy and bold, that penetrate the gloom
Of Britain's farthest glens. The Earth has lent
Her waters, Air her breezes, and the sail
Of traffic glides with ceaseless intercourse,
Glistening along the low and woody dale;
Or, in its progress, on the lofty side
Of some bare hill, with wonder kenned from far.
(V, viii, 269)

The Sage likens the Skeptic's discourse to a light-reflecting Lethe:

Your discourse this day,
That, like the fabled Lethe, wished to flow
In creeping sadness, through oblivious shades
Of death and night, has caught at every turn
The colours of the sun.
(V, iv, 144)

The Sage describes Ambition metaphorically as an eagle reflecting the rays of the setting sun":

> Ambition reigns
> In the waste wilderness: the Soul ascends
> Drawn towards her native firmament of heaven,
> When the fresh eagle, in the month of May,
> Upborne, at evening, on replenished wing,
> This shaded valley leaves; and leaves the dark
> Empurpled hills, conspicuously renewing
> A proud communication with the sun
> Low sunk beneath the horizon!
> (V, iv, 121)

Some of Wordsworth's metaphors, however, are tedious. Others are simply trite; witness, for example, the metaphor combining darkness and despair with light and joy:

> --But suddenly, as if in one kind moment
> To encourage and reprove, a gleam of light
> Broke from the very bosom of that cloud
> Which darkened the whole prospect of his days.
> (V, vi, 228)

Passages such as this contribute to a tediousness in The Excursion which tends to conceal its gem-like vignettes.

Many of these extended similes resemble epic similes in form and detail. It seems as though Wordsworth used these similes to parallel the epic theme he renounced in "Home at Grasmere": "Then farewell to the Warrior's schemes," and "farewell/That other hope, long mine, the hope to fill/The heroic trumpet with the Muse's breath!" (V, 337). In this way Wordsworth adds to the subjective, intellectual tone of his picturesque descriptions. In these similes, then, Wordsworth uses the objective world for his subjective purposes, always starting with the empirical world he has

already seen, reflecting it back outwards, and thus enriching present landscapes with the past.

Subjective Motion

In the poems of 1814 and after, even landscape motion becomes subjective. To begin with, the Sage associates this motion with the "Being" that "moves/In beauty through the world":

> the Being moves
> In beauty through the world; and all who see
> Bless him, rejoicing in his neighbourhood.
> (V, ix, 291)

The narrator feels that he, too, possessed the "unfettered liberty" of the "sunbeams, and shadows" of the valley, "Lords/without restraint of all which they belong":

> [W]ho could gaze
> And not feel motions there? He thought of clouds
> That sail on winds; of Breezes that delight
> To play on water, or in endless chase
> Pursue each other through the yielding plain
> Of grass or corn, over and through and through,
> In billow after billow, evermore
> Disporting. Nor unmindful was the Boy
> Of sunbeams, shadows, butterflies and birds,
> Of fluttering Sylphs, and softly-gliding Fays,
> Genii, and winged Angels that are Lords
> Without restraint of all which they belong.
> The illusion strengthening as he gazed, he felt
> That such unfettered liberty was his.
> (V, 314)

The narrator thus feels united with the empirical landscape--with its clouds, breezes, grass and cornfields, sunbeams, shadows, butterflies, and birds--in freedom of

movement. Consequently the narrator is the nexus of empirical and subjective movement as he feels at one with the non-empirical "fluttering Sylphs," "softly-gliding Fays," "Genii," and "winged Angels." Similarly, the Skeptic desires "liberty" to become part of the landscape and to surrender his body "to the elements" "As if it were a [moving] spirit":

> --How divine,
> The liberty, for frail, for mortal, man
> To roam at large among unpeopled glens
> And mountainous retirements, only trod
> By devious footsteps; regions consecrate
> To oldest time! and, reckless of the storm
> That keeps the raven quiet in her nest,
> Be as a presence or a motion--one
> Among the many there; and while the mists
> Flying, and rainy vapours, call out shapes
> And phantoms from the crags and solid earth
> As fast as a musician scatters sounds
> Out of an instrument.
> (V, iv, 125)

Thus, he wishes to "Be as a presence or a motion--one/Among the many there" and "to roam/An equal among the mightiest energies" (V, iv, 125). The youthful desire to be a "presence" and a "motion" and to move through the landscape is the ultimate subjectivity of landscape movement--the freeing of the spirit from all empirical confines. The fact that the narrator wants to be like the "breezes," "sunbeams," and "shadows," "birds" and "Fays" indicates that this desire for movement is a desire for freedom from empirical restrictions.

Thus, the narrator's freedom corresponds to picturesque freedom from boundaries, and the poet's integration into the landscape corresponds to the merging of landscape objects. However, the observer's wish for absolute freedom is not granted. He cannot be a free spirit. Instead, he learns from Nature to control his impulses, i.e., to be calm:

> But me hath Nature tamed, and bade to seek
> For other agitations, or be calm;
> Hath dealt with me as with a turbulent Stream,
> Some nursling of the mountains, whom she leads
> Through quiet meadows, after he has learnt
> His strength, and had his triumph and his joy,
> His desperate course of tumult and of glee.
> That which in stealth by Nature was performed
> Hath Reason sanctioned. Her deliberate Voice
> Hath said, "Be mild and cleave to gentle things,
> Thy glory and thy happiness be there."
> (V, 337)

The Skeptic uses the river to illustrate the gentle motion of his calm life:

> The tenour
> Which my life holds, he readily may conceive
> Who'er hath stood to watch a mountain brook
> In some still passage of its course, and seen,
> Within the depths of its capacious breast,
> Inverted trees, rocks, clouds, and azure sky;
> And, on its glassy surface, specks of foam,
> And conglobated bubbles undissolved,
> Numerous as stars; that, by their onward lapse,
> Betray to sight the motion of the stream,
> Else imperceptible. . . .
> (V, iii, 108)

The remaining scenes illustrate the motion-in-calm and the gentling of motion which Wordsworth had already achieved in earlier poetry. Here, even the buildings have "movement":

> Thy Church and Cottages of mountain stone
> Clustered like stars some few, but single most,
> And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
> Or glancing at each other chearful looks
> Like separated stars with clouds between.
> (V, 317)

As in 1793, verbals, such as "lurking" and "glancing," provide the ambiguity of movement and rest.

Sunsets also illustrate movement: "the air/Breathes invitation" (V, ix, 300); "rays of light--/Now suddenly diverging from the orb/Retired" or "shot upwards"; "floating clouds" "change"; and "clouds" are "giving back and shedding each on each" "the bright hues" (V, ix, 306-307).

As in the above description of sunset, the majority of scenes combine motion and calm in such a way that the motion seems to be calm and vice versa. For instance, the description of the movement of the swans actually translates into a scene of calm:

> And in and all about that playful band,
> Incapable although they be of rest,
> And in their fashion very rioters,
> There is a stillness, and they seem to make
> Calm revelry in that their calm abode.
> (V, 333)

Similarly, motion occurs in such seemingly motionless spots as the Skeptic's "hidden nook":

> But no breeze did now
> Find entrance;--high or low appeared no trace
> Of motion, save the water that descended,
> Diffused adown that barrier of steep rock,
> And softly creeping, like a breath of air,

Such as is sometimes seen, and hardly seen,
To brush the still breast of a crystal lake.
(V, iii, 77)

And in the discourse on the dalesman, the Pastor turns a scene of motion into one of calm:

When stormy winds
Were working the broad bosom of the lake
Into a thousand thousand sparkling waves,
Rocking the trees, or driving cloud on cloud
Along the sharp edge of yon lofty crags,
The agitated scene before his eye
Was silent as a picture: evermore
Were all things silent, wheresoe'er he moved.
(V, vii, 244)

Finally, as the sea's motion diminishes into gentleness in "Evening Voluntaries: By the Sea-side," the quieting of motion teaches the "soothing recompense" of "change":

The sun is couched, the sea-fowl gone to rest,
And the wild storm hath somewhere found a nest;
Air slumbers--wave with wave no longer strives,
Only a heaving of the deep survives,
A tell-tale motion! soon will it be laid,
And by the tide alone the water swayed.
Stealthy withdrawings, interminglings mild
Of light with shade in beauty reconciled--
Such is the prospect far as sight can range,
The soothing recompence, the welcome change.
(IV, 3)

Thus, the change from landscape motion to landscape calm reflects the artist's personal change from youthful movement to mature calm. In other words, the mature artist transfers his personal development into his artistic style when he transfers landscape motion from individual objects to the whole--as a breath hovering over a picture "now at rest."

Subjective Space

As pointed out in the discussion of splendour, Wordsworth transforms the non-empirical Presence, with which he has filled his landscape space, into a divine Presence. However, Wordsworth also merges this Presence with the empirical world in typical painterly fashion. Woelfflin illustrates this merging of corporeal objects into surrounding incorporeal space with the figure merging into the background: "figure and space, corporeal and incorporeal, can unite in the impression of an independent tonal movement" (Principles, p. 20).

Wordsworth rhetorically combines the corporeal and incorporeal in the "living Presence." When the narrator of "Home at Grasmere" adds the synonym "Beauty" to the word Presence, the Presence becomes a living being with feminine connotations: "Beauty"--"a living Presence of the earth"--"waits upon [the narrator's] steps" and "Pitches her tents before [him] as [he moves]/An hourly neighbour."

This "Beauty" has both empirical and non-empirical qualities: Like the divine Presence, "Beauty" is superior to empirical "Forms" "composed/From earth's materials":

> --Beauty--[is] a living Presence of the earth,
> Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
> Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
> From earth's materials.
>
> (V, 5)

An empirical Presence is suggested, however, when Beauty is described as a "visible Presence," which, with "whatever

else of outward form," gives "inward help":

> Hail to the visible Presence, hail to thee,
> Delightful Valley, habitation fair!
> And to whatever else of outward form
> Can give us inward help, can purify
> And elevate, and harmonise, and soothe,
> And steal away, and for a while deceive
> And lap in pleasing rest, and bear us on
> Without desire in full complacency.
> (V, 324)

Wordsworth again deliberately blends the empirical and the non-empirical when he deals with the creation of man. When the Sage describes God and the Angels on earth before the Fall, he is deliberately ambiguous as to whether the "hills of paradise" are empirical--"sensible/To sight and feeling"--or non-empirical--merely "condescendingly" "shadowed forth":

> --From those pure heights
> (Whether of actual vision, sensible
> To sight and feeling, or that in this sort
> Have condescendingly been shadowed forth
> Communications spiritually maintained,
> And intuitions moral and divine)
> Fell Human-kind.
> (V, iv, 129)

Nevertheless, most references to the Presence are non-empirical. The Sage calls it "an <u>active</u> Principle" of "freedom" and "the Soul of all the worlds":

> "To every Form of being is assigned,"
> Thus calmly spake the venerable Sage,
> "An <u>active</u> Principle:--howe'er removed
> From sense and observation, it subsists
> In all things, in all natures; in the stars
> Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,

> In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
> That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
> The moving waters, and the invisible air.
> Whate'er exists hath properties that spread
> Beyond itself, communicating good,
> A simple blessing, or with evil mixed;
> Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
> No chasm, no solitude; from link to link
> It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds.
> This is the freedom of the universe;
> Unfolded still the more, more visible,
> The more we know; and yet is reverenced least,
> And least respected in the human Mind,
> Its most apparent home."
>
> (V, ix, 286-287)

Echoing "Tintern Abbey," the narrator places the non-empirical Presence in insubstantial, i.e., non-empirical, spaces--"the unenduring clouds," "the moving waters," "the invisible air," and especially in "the human Mind,/Its most apparent home." Nevertheless, this Presence is "more visible,/The more we know." The Pastor closes the ambiguity, however, when he affirms that the Presence is the "Eternal Spirit" or the "universal God" and that the sunset is his "effluence" or the "faint reflections . . . of [His] face" (V, ix, 307).

The narrator then expresses his desire to equal the Presence. He wants his body to "Be as a presence or a motion--one/Among the many" in the "unpeopled glens/And mountainous retirements," and he would like to "roam/An equal among mightiest energies" (V, iv, 125). The Sage recognizes this youthful "ambition of [the] soul," as a "noble restlessness," and we sense in it the lost rapture of the "Ode: Intimations" and "Tintern Abbey":

whoso'er in youth
Has, through ambition of his soul, given way
To such desires, and grasped at such delight,
Shall feel congenial stirrings late and long,
In spite of all the weakness that life brings,
Its cares and sorrows; he, though taught to own
The tranquillizing power of time, shall wake,
Wake sometimes to a noble restlessness--
Loving the sports which once he gloried in.
(V, iv, 126)

Like the narrator of "Tintern Abbey," the Sage has experienced but lost those youthful raptures:

Those fervent raptures are for ever flown;
And, since their date, my soul hath undergone
Change manifold, for better or for worse:
Yet cease I not to struggle, and aspire
Heavenward; and chide the part of me that flags,
Through sinful choice; or dread necessity
On human nature from above imposed.
(V, iv, 113)

Thus, if the youthful ambition to equal the "mightiest energies" in the mountains and the valleys produced the "fervent raptures" of the Sage and the "dizzy raptures" of "Tintern Abbey's" narrator, these earth-bound raptures of the senses had to be replaced by the raptures of the spirit, as the Sage goes on to explain: "yet cease I not to struggle, and aspire/Heavenward."

Instead of being one of the powers of nature, the narrator can only commune with them. Thus, the Sage wishes "to commune with the invisible world":

And may it not be hoped, that, placed by age
In like removal [on a mountain top], tranquil
though severe,

We are not so removed for utter loss;
But for some favour, suited to our need?
What more than that the severing should confer
Fresh power to commune with the invisible world,
And hear the mighty stream of tendency
Uttering, for elevation of our thought,
A clear sonorous voice, inaudible
To the vast multitude; whose doom it is
To run the giddy round of vain delight,
Or fret and labour on the Plain below.
(V, ix, 289)

Elevated high above the usual picturesque vantage point, the narrator is now closer to the "invisible world" that his intellect has created. Thus, his communication will turn more to the spiritual than to the natural world. This kind of communication had existed first between God, the Angels, and man:

Upon the breast of new-created earth
Man walked; and when and wheresoe'er he moved,
Alone or mated, solitude was not.
He heard, borne on the wind, the articulate voice
Of God; and Angels to his sight appeared
Crowning the glorious hills of paradise;
Or through the groves gliding like morning mist
Enkindled by the sun. He sate--and talked
With wing'ed Messengers; who daily brought
To his small island in the ethereal deep
Tidings of joy and love.
(V, iv, 129)

Since the Fall, presumably, the Presence has communicated with man through Nature:

Nature fails not to provide
Impulse and utterance. The whispering air
Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights,
And blind recesses of the caverned rocks.
(V, iv, 146)

> [Nature is] our Companion while we track
> Her rivers populous with gliding life;
> While, free as air, o'er printless sands we march,
> Or pierce the gloom of her majestic woods;
> Roaming, or resting under grateful shade
> In peace and meditative cheerfulness;
> Where living things, and things inanimate,
> Do speak, at Heaven's command, to eye and ear,
> And speak to social reason's inner sense,
> With inarticulate language.
> (V, iv, 147-148)

Thus, after the Fall, Nature became God's proxy in communication with man. According to The Prelude, this communication occurs by voice. The function and ownership of this voice differs, however, in the opinion of each narrator. In The Prelude the voice belongs to the Presence. In "Home at Grasmere" the voice belongs to the "presiding Spirit" which leads and hallows the vale's inhabitants:

> Ah, if I wished to follow where the sight
> Of all that is before my eyes, the voice
> Which speaks from a presiding Spirit here,
> Would lead me, I should whisper to myself:
> They who are dwellers in this holy place
> Must needs themselves be hallowed.
> (V, 323)

For the Sage this voice is the "Authentic tidings of invisible things" which the "universe" "impart[s]" to "the ear of Faith" as a does seashell. These "tidings" concern "power" amid "agitation" and "peace":

> Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
> And central peace, subsisting at the heart
> Of endless agitation.
> (V, iv, 145)

And for the Skeptic, instead of a voice, there is a voiceless language of the "clouds," "mist," "shadows," "light," and "motions of moonlight" which soothes "sick hearts":

> [T]hough there be no voice;--the clouds,
> The mist, the shadows, light of golden suns,
> Motions of moonlight, all come thither--touch,
> And have an answer--thither come, and shape
> A language not unwelcome to sick hearts
> And idle spirits.
> (V, ii, 67)

According to the narrator of "Home at Grasmere" this voice will teach the poet about the spiritual world, and as in The Prelude, the poet's voice in turn will transmit what he has been "divinely taught" (V, 336). The narrator tells us what this message will be: "A Voice shall speak" "On Man on Nature and on Human life" (V, 338).

Conclusion

In these explorations of light, motion, space, and the shift from objective to subjective, we find that Wordsworth continues to assert the indispensability of the empirical world, even though he recognizes the non-empirical world's superiority. For instance, although the Sage asserts that the "transcendent truths" will "endure" while "This universe shall pass away" (V, iv, 112), in "Home at Grasmere" the narrator reinforces the harmony of the empirical and the non-empirical. "The one sensation that is here" (V, 317)

consists of "the sense/Of majesty, and beauty, and repose,/A blended holiness of earth and sky" (V, 318). And Wordsworth continues to laud the material forms which lead to "perfection absolute":

> Hail to the visible Presence, hail to thee,
> Delightful Valley, habitation fair!
> And to whatever else of outward form
> Can give us inward help, can purify,
> And elevate, and harmonise, and soothe,
> And steal away, and for a while deceive
> And lap in pleasing rest, and bear us on
> Without desire in full complacency,
> Contemplating perfection absolute
> And entertained as in a placid sleep.
> (V, 324)

Furthermore, Wordsworth continues to assert the empirical world's indispensability for teaching man about the non-empirical world. In the words of the Sage:

> Whate'er we see,
> Or feel, shall tend to quicken and refine
> The humblest functions of corporeal sense;
> Shall fix, in calmer seats of moral strength,
> Earthly desires; and raise, to loftier heights
> Of divine love, our intellectual soul.
> (V, iv, 149-150)

Even the Skeptic describes an empirical/non-empirical harmony of "the vital beams/Of present sunshine" and the "Deities that float/On wings, angelic Spirits":

> nor did e'er,
> From me, those dark impervious shades,
> that hang
> Upon the region whither we are bound,
> Exclude a power to enjoy the vital beams
> Of present sunshine.--Deities that float

> On wings, angelic Spirits! I could muse
> O'er what from eldest time we have been told
> Of your bright forms and glorious faculties,
> And with the imagination rest content,
> Not wishing more.
> (V, iii, 84)

But unlike the empirical world, the non-empirical world is difficult to experience, as the Sage explains (echoing Vergil's Cumaean Sibyl): "'Tis, by comparison, an easy task/Earth to despise; but, to converse with heaven--/This is not easy'" (V, iv, 113). Furthermore, non-empirical, "Ethereal hopes" are like "smoke" which "dissolves" as it ascends:

> --Man is of dust: ethereal hopes are his,
> Which, when they should sustain themselves aloft,
> Want due consistence; like a pillar of smoke,
> That with majestic energy from earth
> Rises; but, having reached the thinner air,
> Melts, and dissolves, and is no longer seen.
> (V, iv, 113)

Nevertheless, the "unimprisoned Mind" still desires to roam the "loved haunts" of the empirical world in "thoughts," "images," and "high desires":

> Ah! if the time must come, in which my feet
> No more shall stray where meditation leads,
> By flowing stream, through wood, or craggy wild,
> Loved haunts like these; the unimprisoned Mind
> May yet have scope to range among her own,
> Her thoughts, her images, her high desires.
> (V, iv, 112)

According to the Sage, the non-empirical world is easier to see with "Age." Age is "a final EMINENCE" that "might be likened to a "mountain-top" where the

unsubstantial world can be seen more easily than the sensual world below:

> Faint, and diminished to the gazing eye,
> Forest and field and hill and dale appear,
> With all the shapes over their surface spread:
> But, while the gross and visible frame of things
> Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
> All unsubstantialized.
>
> (V, ix, 288)

Finally, in "Ecclesiastical Sonnets: XLVI" the narrator reveals the empirical/non-empirical message: "Earth prompts--Heaven urges; let us seek the light" (III, 406). This light is a combination of empirical and non-empirical light, and the narrator's message is to seek the non-empirical light <u>by means of</u> the empirical light.

This tipping of the empirical/non-empirical balance parallels the objective/subjective shift in Wordsworth's point of view. For example, when Wordsworth transplants picturesque light and shade into the Mind in 1814, he uses remembered or selected landscape parts to embellish moral tales. Thus, like Gilpin, Wordsworth fabricates landscapes from the best features of remembered landscapes. Gilpin describes this process of creation from select parts of the landscape: "the imagination, impressed with the most beautiful scenes, and chastened by rules of art, forms it's [sic] pictures, not only from the most admirable parts of nature; but in the best taste" (<u>Three Essays</u>, p. 52). Furthermore, this recollection can provide more pleasure than the original view of the scene: "There may be more

pleasure in recollecting, and recording, from a few transient lines, the scene we have admired, than in the present enjoyment of them" (Three Essays, p. 51).

Movement and calm also reflect the empirical/non-empirical balance. In other words, motion seems to merge into calm, calm into motion, to produce paradoxically calm motion or motion-in-calm. Nature's lesson is to attain this calm.

The merging of motion and calm coincides with the picturesque merger of landscape objects. In turn, the merging of objects reflects the narrator's youthful desire to equal, i.e. merge with, the powers or presence in the landscape. Finally, the empirical/non-empirical balance is the curriculum for learning, or for achieving knowledge, since the empirical world is the first step in learning about the non-empirical world. Thus, learning involves the mental integration of landscape objects and landscape space.

As mentioned above, Wordsworth effects closure of this empirical/non-empirical ambiguity by identifying the Presence and splendour with the divine (the supernatural or the non-empirical). Then as poet, Wordsworth takes over splendour's pedagogical function as a guide to divine truths. This divine vision of the artist/painter is found in Price's description of picturesque vision. Price illustrates the painter's "world" with that seen by Aeneas when Venus removes the veil from his eyes. In this example Price alludes to Aeneas' seeing the gods aid in the

destruction of Troy. Seeing the divine in the empirical world, then, belongs to the picturesque, and Wordsworth's vision of heavenly beings in sunset splendour is thus appropriately picturesque. Wordsworth makes it clear throughout his poetry, from "Tintern Abbey" onwards, that this non-empirical, later divine, Presence is in the air, ocean, and sunlight, and not, as in classical or linear style, as a three-dimensional figure visible in the landscape. Even Wordsworth's genius of the place is never actually seen but is described in retrospect or from hear-say. Instead of placing a mythological personage in the landscape, like the genii in Giorgione's Fete Champetre, Wordsworth describes the whistle of the wind and the moving clouds, shadows, deer, and willows.

Wordsworth's picturesque way of looking at the world illustrates certain values which characterize the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. First, Wordsworth's picturesque motion leads to a freedom from the stasis of a classical or linear representation of objects. Secondly, Wordsworth's picturesque/painterly relatedness of merging objects leads to the idea of organic unity instead of to a classic harmony of separate parts. Wordsworth's picturesque brilliance assumes the eighteenth century moral function by teaching natural morality, while his picturesque splendour teaches the relatedness of objects in terms of love: between one's fellow man, between man and the empirical world, and between man and the non-empirical

world. Finally, calm and splendour teach the poet to receive truth: both empirical and non-empirical.

The difference between Wordsworth's early (1793) picturesque and later (1800) picturesque poetry lies in Wordsworth's freeing himself from the restrictions of massing. Wordsworth challenges Gilpin's artificial predominance of shadow, characteristic of An Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches, as he searches for more realistic ways to describe what he sees. The result is Wordsworth's picturesque fusion of parts into a whole--through movement, splendour, and merging--in which the parts lose their separateness and become an organic unity which includes the poet.

Wordsworth's picturesque development thus began in 1793 with massing. Almost immediately Wordsworth began altering the proportions in favor of light. During his crisis of 1800-09, Wordsworth questioned Gilpin's formula of light/shade contrast and even tried to eliminate it altogether. By 1802-09, he seemed to fear in retrospect that he would have to give up the "visionary gleam" along with massing. By separating Price's brilliance and splendour from Gilpin's rigid formula of predominance of shade, however, Wordsworth was able to solve this problem by describing what he really saw, not what would look Gilpinesque, since brilliance and splendour existed in nature whereas massing could be contrived. Wordsworth then described his childhood development in terms of brilliance

and splendour, which Price had associated with curiosity. Here he replaced the "faithless gleam" with the "visionary gleam." Thanks to the psychological theory of Hartley and Reid, it was a small step from curiosity to learning--and ultimately to teaching. Thus, Wordsworth made brilliance and splendour teachers. Light--brilliance and splendour--taught him about the empirical and the non-empirical worlds: natural morality, love--both human and divine--and relatedness--of empirical objects, of man, and of man and the empirical world. Later, having freed himself from the tyranny of massing, Wordsworth could again use massing when useful--either to describe the simplistic vision of children or to add variety to his later descriptions.

Thanks to the picturesque, Wordsworth moved beyond objective, empirical vision to subjective, empirical vision. This subjective empirical dimension belongs especially to the picturesque, because broken lines and indistinct boundaries open up the space surrounding objects for subjective exploitation. Wordsworth increasingly occupies himself with subjective enlargement of this space.

Even though the associative picturesque is outside the scope of this dissertation, it is obvious that Wordsworth extensively injects the associative picturesque into the visual picturesque. In The Excursion, for example, he uses visual picturesque technique to frame tales of virtuous men and women.

Wordsworth did not abandon the picturesque, then, as has been thought, but instead, he developed the picturesque to its fullest capacity. A more accurate description of his development would be that he moved from an objective, ornamental picturesque to a subjective or painterly picturesque, characteristic of the development of artists, such as Rembrandt. However, after 1814, Wordsworth's picturesque becomes more ornamental, almost mannerist, as he crowded remembered picturesque scenes into his created similes and metaphors.

The picturesque then was an indispensable tool enabling Wordsworth to move out of the confines of a classical, linear vision of the world into a free, organic, and subjective vision of the world. Consciously or unconsciously, Wordsworth chose the vision of post-renaissance art--the baroque and the rococo--instead of the vision of classical and neo-classical art. Paradoxically, through the picturesque perception of the world, Wordsworth was able to more accurately--that is impressionistically--imitate the empirical world than were his neo-classical predecessors. To add another paradox, this careful description of the empirical world opened up a non-empirical dimension, in which the well-defined classical gods and goddesses abdicated to a new, formless transcendental being in the landscape.

Wordsworth's mind, then, perceives the external world and creates poetry from the impressions it receives. This

external world, as seen with the picturesque eye, provides all the sensations necessary to teach truth--both material and non-material. For Wordsworth, the "picturesque" empirical world is the means by which we learn about the "painterly" empirical world and the non-empirical world beyond it.

Notes

[1] To the volume and page numbers of the de Selincourt edition, I have added the appropriate book number of The Excursion in lower-case Roman numerals.

[2] See Plato's discussion of light, both visual and mental, in Francis Macdonald Cornford's edition of Plato The Republic of Plato (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 219. Cornford's note on the three kinds of visible light, first introduced in Plato's Timaeus, suggests by analogy in The Republic three kinds of intelligible light: a fire from the Sun or the Good, a fire from the eye or the soul, and a fire from the visible or intelligible object.

CHAPTER 7
UT PICTURA POESIS: CONSTABLE AND WORDSWORTH

Constable and the Visual Picturesque

Despite critics such as Reg Gadney, who caution against an assumed "connection between poet and painter only on the grounds of some indetermined feel for landscape" (1976), Constable's painting--particularly his brilliance--resembles Wordsworth's poetic descriptions. Both poet and painter illustrate visual picturesque style, and both put this style to similar new uses: Wordsworth applies it to poetic diction and to humble themes, and Constable applies it to unpretentious English landscapes not previously sanctioned by tradition. Poets, such as John Dyer and James Beattie, and prosers, such as Sir Walter Scott and James Macpherson, had already experimented with aspects of picturesque style, but Wordsworth made it equal in stature to traditional "linear" poetic style. Similarly, aspects of the visual picturesque style had been used by painters, such as Richard Wilson, Francis Towne, J. R. Cozens, Thomas Gainsborough, James de Loutherbourg, Francis Wheatley, George Morland, Thomas Rowlandson, and William Hodges. Unlike his predecessors, however, Constable attempted to make picturesque landscape painting accepted--not only by the

buying public but also by the official art establishment. Unlike Wordsworth, however, who achieved recognition in his own lifetime, Constable did not achieve comparable recognition until after his death.

It is not my purpose to prove any direct influence between Wordsworth and Constable with respect to the visual picturesque style or to brilliance, precedents for both of which were available in poetry, painting, and theories of painting and landscape gardening. Instead, I would merely like to point out the similarities between their visual picturesque styles--particularly with respect to brilliance--as examples of parallel movements of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century art and poetry.

In Constable: The Painter and His Landscape (1983), Michael Rosenthal considers Constable's early and late paintings picturesque: "Constable happily adopted the picturesque both in colouring and in principles of composition: in the studies of 1802 (pp. 31-32), and from 1803 to 1806 he maintained this interest (p. 38).[2] Rosenthal writes that Constable returned in 1821 to the picturesque "aesthetic" which he had apparently "abandoned" [again] in 1814 (p. 154) after a non-picturesque preoccupation with sublime, georgic, and iconographic subjects.[3] Constable himself uses the term picturesque to describe such paintings as The Lock of 1814: "'It is a good subject and an admirable instance of the picturesque'" (Rosenthal, p. 154).

Although I agree with Rosenthal that Constable's early and late style was picturesque, I differ with respect to Constable's middle period, which I also consider to be picturesque.

This disagreement arises from the prevailing ambiguity of the word picturesque. A mutually agreeable definition of the picturesque would be helpful in criticism. Knight and Price struggled with this definition and failed to agree. However, I believe that Sypher has helped solve the problem by separating the picturesque into the visual and the associative, something which Knight came close to but did not make quite clear. Sypher's distinction between the visual and the associative picturesque has made further analysis of the picturesque possible.

Sypher's visual and associative picturesque help us to distinguish between style and subject. If we look for this difference between style and subject in Constable's paintings, we can see that Constable applied visual picturesque style to both associative and non-associative subjects. Rosenthal has followed Gilpin, however, in preferring not to allow association in picturesque subjects.[4] However, if we follow Sypher and call Rosenthal's description of Constable visual picturesque instead of "picturesque" or associative picturesque instead of "georgic" and "iconographic," we can account for Constable's development completely within the picturesque aesthetic.

Therefore, we can read "visual picturesque" when Rosenthal uses "picturesque." For instance, Rosenthal writes that Constable's "selection of landscape motif was dictated by [visual] picturesque principles" when they allowed him "to assess landscapes objectively, irrespective of any content or meaning they might have had" (p. 34). [Here "objective" is used in the broader sense of opposite to subjective association.]

Similarly, we can read "associative picturesque" when Rosenthal uses "georgic," "iconographic," or "significant figures." For instance, in Constable's 1810 "Dedham Vale, Morning" and "A Church Porch," "not only was the choice of terrain new, but so was the break away from the picturesque or sublime through the introduction of [associative picturesque] significant figures, in harmony with the ethos of the landscapes themselves" (p. 47).

The visual nature of Constable's 1802 picturesque is apparent in Rosenthal's analysis: Rosenthal writes that "[Constable's] 1802 studies did not indicate that the painter also interpreted the objects of creation as signifiers of an intellectual structure, save that perhaps we are meant generally to see the hand of the Deity in His creation" (p. 38). Similarly, the visual nature of Knight's picturesque is apparent in Rosenthal's analysis. For Rosenthal, Knight's picturesque excludes any intellectual or mental content:

> By divesting the sign of signification, "ideas", the knowledge of art learned via its study, could nullify the power of the most disgusting subjects: "beautiful tints and lights, and shadows, when separated, in the imitation, from the disagreeable qualities with which they were united, are as truly beautiful as if they had never been united with any such qualities." (p. 35)

The visual nature of Gilpin is also apparent in Rosenthal's analysis: "Gilpin was particularly exercised by this problem. . . . [I]t was fallacious therefore to call fields of corn or whatever 'picturesque', for this associated non-pictorial ideas and visual impression, although in reality these should be kept apart. . . , [and] moral and picturesque ideas 'need not coincide'" (p. 35). "By divorcing the object from all associations, Gilpin destroyed its content (p. 36). . . . And therefore, a picturesque painting should tend to have no significant subject-matter" (p. 37).

Thus, Gilpin created the picturesque problem by suggesting that the picturesque exclude association. As Sypher and others have pointed out, however, Alison altered Gilpin's proscription so that the picturesque could be both visual and associative.

Rosenthal explains that the source of Constable's new "georgic" and "iconographic" association is Alison: "Constable had rather brutally precised [sic] the newly fashionable associationist aesthetic of the Reverend Archibald Alison, and his language confirms that he had again broken away from the formalism of the picturesque to

an art with a significant iconography" (p.74). Sypher, on the other hand, would simply say that Constable added the associative picturesque to the visual picturesque in this middle period. Gilpin, Knight, and Sypher would agree, moreover, that the visual and associative picturesques can occur either together or separately.

Like Price, Rosenthal also considers the sublime and beautiful to be outside the picturesque. According to Rosenthal, Constable again abandons the picturesque in the 1806 Lake District paintings when he paints sublime or beautiful subjects.

> Like the 1802 studies, these 1806 ones concentrate on landscape, but not on its inhabitants. By exchanging the picturesque for the sublime or beautiful, Constable was continuing to regard landscape simply as motif, something allowing nothing but an objective appraisal. (p. 41)

I claim with Gilpin and Knight, on the other hand, that the picturesque style is not separate from the sublime and beautiful but can be applied to both, i.e., a scene is picturesque as long as the style remains rough--with lights and shadows chasing one another in masses or flecks of light. Thus, with Gilpin and Knight--contra Rosenthal and Price--I would say 1) that Constable painted his Lake District paintings and their sublime subjects in the picturesque style and 2) that Constable's subject matter changed during his middle period, not his style.

In summary, I differ from Rosenthal's thesis that Constable abandoned the picturesque for the sublime or the beautiful in his 1806 Lake District paintings or that by introducing association he abandoned the picturesque for the iconographic in his 1810 Stour Valley paintings. Instead, I claim that Constable continued to use visual picturesque principles, as did Wordsworth, throughout his career, even after briefly adding association (the associative picturesque) to his visual picturesque style between 1806 and 1821.

In this chapter I will demonstrate Constable's visual picturesque style through comments, descriptions, and criticisms, made by himself and others, in his correspondence, lectures, and letterpress for English Landscape. Then I will compare the picturesque styles of Wordsworth and Constable. I would like to go a step further than Rosenthal, moreover, and say that not only was Constable picturesque with respect to color and composition, he was also picturesque, as Wordsworth was picturesque, with respect to moving lights and shades, indistinct lines, merging of masses, motion, and non-corporeal space. Unlike Wordsworth, however, Constable did not charge this space with a Presence.[5] Instead, Constable regarded Nature in conventional allegory and as the metonymic "hand of God." Within this visual style, however, Wordsworth makes a transition from passive to active observation, while Constable sees actively from the beginning. In Woelfflinian

terms, Wordsworth moved from "picturesque" to "painterly" while Constable moved within varying degrees of "painterly."

Constable's Massing, Line, Brilliance and Splendour

Critics agree in recognizing the features in Constable which constitute what Sypher, Gilpin, and Knight call the visual picturesque--massing, indistinct line, and movement of light and shade. Without using the term visual picturesque, Russell Noyes nevertheless describes Constable's style in visual picturesque terms.[6] He refers to massing and indistinct line when he writes, "[Constable] had come to realize that the world is seen as light and shade, never as line" (p. 68). He refers to contrast and brilliance when he writes, "[Constable] fixed the highlights, conveying light shattering into splinters on an uneven hillside" (p.69). He recognizes movement of light when he writes, "[the Lake Country sketches] show for the first time [Constable's] new method for expressing light in motion" (p. 69). And he suggests a spiritual essence in the resulting inter-objective space when he writes, "[both Wordsworth and Constable shared the belief] that the beautiful objects of Nature can reveal moral and spiritual essences of their own" because they are "incorporated with the moving spirit of Nature" (pp. 82-83). (I should reiterate here, though, that I do not find this spiritual essence in Constable.)

Kenneth Clark also describes Constable's picturesque light effects in Landscape into Art in terms of brilliance and moving masses of light and shade:[7]

> Another reason [why Constable was able to present such a quantity of normal observation without the painful banality of later realists] was the importance which he attached to what he called "the chiaroscuro of nature." The phrase occurs repeatedly in his letters, and it is evident from the contexts that he uses it to describe two rather different effects. First he meant the sparkle of light, "the dews--breezes--bloom and freshness, not one of which has yet been perfected on canvas of any painter in the world." This was the aspect of his work which is usually considered most original, and the technical devices by which it was achieved, the broken touches and flicks of pure white with a palette knife, were a decisive influence on French painting. But by "chiaroscuro of nature" Constable also meant that some drama of light and shade must underlie all landscape compositions, and give the keynote of feeling in which the scene was painted. (p. 148)

In the word chiaroscuro we recognize both brilliance and massing. "The sparkle of light" suggests Price's brilliance and "the drama of light and shade [which] must underlie all landscape compositions" suggests Gilpin's massing and gradation of light and shade across uneven surfaces.

Constable's biography abounds with the word chiaroscuro, which he inherited from the same seventeenth-century painters that Gilpin, Reynolds, Price, and Knight, considered picturesque--Titian, Rubens, Rembrandt, and Claude. Constable's biographer, C. R. Leslie, writes that "with Constable chiaroscuro was the one thing to be obtained at whatever cost": "'I was always determined,' he said,

'that my pictures should have chiaroscuro, if they had nothing else.'"[8] Leslie also writes that

> many artists see [chiaroscuro] nowhere, but Constable saw it everywhere, and in all its beauty. Why then should he go in quest of subjects when the spots endeared to him from his infancy, or from the associations of friendship, had not only in general great attractions of their own, but where they had least of beauty could be elevated by this power to sublimity? (Leslie, p. 288)

And at the end of his second lecture at the Royal Institute, Constable refers to "chiaroscuro" as "the soul and medium of art" (Leslie, p. 313).

Rembrandt was Constable's "somewhat exaggerated" example of chiaroscuro in the third lecture at the Royal Institute:

> Rembrandt's "Mill" is a picture wholly made by chiaroscuro; the last ray of light just gleams on the upper sail of the mill, and all other details are lost in large and simple masses of shade. Chiaroscuro is the great feature that characterises his art, and was carried farther by him than by any other painter, not excepting Correggio. (quoted in Leslie, p. 315)

Yet, he considers Claude and Ostade the masters of chiaroscuro: "'The most perfect of all masters of real chiaroscuro are Claude and Ostade. The chiaroscuro of Rembrandt is decidedly an artificial feature in his works; he painted expressly for it; it was his own peculiar language, and used by him to express the sentiment'" (Leslie, p. 274).

Thus, chiaroscuro was the effect Constable most frequently discussed. It is not surprising, then, that the first half of the title page of the letterpress to English Landscape (1833) focuses on chiaroscuro:

VARIOUS SUBJECTS OF
L A N D S C A P E
CHARACTERISTIC OF ENGLISH SCENERY,
PRINCIPALLY INTENDED TO DISPLAY
THE PHENOMENA OF THE CHIAR'OSCURO OF NATURE:
FROM PICTURES PAINTED BY
JOHN CONSTABLE, R. A.
(Beckett, p. 7)

Constable, like Price, quotes Cicero to illustrate the special appreciation painters have of shadows: " . . . the Student of Nature may daily watch her endless varieties of effect, for by him it is, that these changes are particularly observed: '*Multa vident Pictores in imminentia et in umbris quae nos non videmus*. --CICERO'" (Beckett, p. 9). Constable traces this special sight back to the ancients: "Yet if we are to believe Pliny and other ancient writers, chiaroscuro as well as colour was thoroughly understood and practised by the great historical painters" (Leslie, p. 290).

Constable's main intention in English Landscape is to call attention to this chiaroscuro, as he writes in the prospectus:

> its aim [is] to direct attention to the source of one of [Art's] most efficient principles, the "CHIAR'OSCURO OF NATURE", to mark the influence of light and shadow upon Landscape, not only in its general effect on the whole, and as a means of rendering a proper emphasis on the "parts", in

> Painting, but also to show its use and power as a medium of expression, so as to note "the day, the hour, the sunshine, and the shade". In some of these subjects of Landscape an attempt has been made to arrest the more abrupt and transient appearances of the CHIAR'OSCURO IN NATURE; to shew its effect in the most striking manner, to give "to one brief moment caught from fleeting time', a lasting and sober existence, and to render permanent many of those splendid but evanescent Exhibitions, which are ever occurring in the changes of external Nature. (quoted in Beckett, pp. 9-10)

Chiaroscuro is also stressed in Constable's Prospectus extract of 1835:

> Also, Remarks on LIGHT AND SHADE, to show how essentially it is connected with LANDSCAPE;--that from the congeniality of the principles of the CHIAR'OSCURO does really exist in NATURE (as well as Tone)--and, that it is the medium by which the grand and varied aspects of Landscape are displayed, both in the fields and on canvass:--thus he will be in possession of a power capable in itself, alone, of imparting Expression, Taste, and Sentiment. (quoted Beckett, p. 11)

As the above passage indicates, Constable imitated the chiaroscuro he found in nature. As he wrote in the "Address" (in the British Library's copy of <u>English Landscape</u>):

> The subjects of all the plates are from real scenes, and the effects of light and shadow are merely transcripts of what happened at the time they were taken. . . . The object in view in their production has been to display the phaenomena of the CHIAR'OSCURO of Nature, to mark some of its endless beauties and varieties, to point out its vast influence upon Landscape, and to show its use and power as a medium of expression. (quoted in Beckett, p. 84)

Constable's "sparkle of light" is chiaroscuro at its most striking. If Price hadn't preceded Constable, this glitter could be a locus classicus for Price's brilliance. By the term brilliance Price refers to the "flicker," "glitter," or "irritation caused by real light" (I, 134), and his description of light reflected from leaves seems to describe that of Constable:[9]

> Light itself, when broken in its passage, though the quantity be diminished, is rendered more irritating; we can bear the full uninterrupted splendour of the setting sun, nay gaze on the orb itself with little uneasiness; but when its rays are broken by passing through a thin screen of leaves and branches, no eye is proof against its irritation. (I, 116-119)

Price, we must remember, considers irritation to be "the source of our most active and lively pleasures" (I, 126-127).

Like Price, Constable found this "brightness" or "freshness" in Flemish painters: "'The Dutch art is more influenced by chiaroscuro, the Flemish by colour, by brightness, and hilarity'" (Leslie, p. 315, Third Lecture at the Royal Institute). For Constable, Rubens was the painter of "freshness and dewy light":

> By the Rainbow of Rubens, I do not allude to a particular picture, for Rubens often introduced it; I mean, indeed, more than the rainbow itself, I mean dewy light and freshness, the departing shower, with the exhilaration of the returning sun, effects which Rubens, more than any other painter, has perfected on canvas. (quoted in Leslie, p. 315)

And

> In no other branch of the art is Rubens greater than in landscape;--the freshness and dewy light, the joyous and animated character which he has imparted to it, impressing on the level monotonous scenery of Flanders all the richness which belongs to its noblest features. Rubens delighted in phenomena--rainbows upon a stormy sky,--bursts of sunshine,--moonlight,--meteors,--and impetuous torrents mingling their sound with wind and wave. Among his finest works are a pair of landscapes. ["The Chateau de Steen" and "The Rainbow Landscape"] (quoted in Leslie, p. 299 and note)

John Fisher had similarly written to Constable; "'I have heard it remarked of Rubens, that one of his pictures <u>illuminates</u> a room. It gives a cheerfulness to everything about it.'" (Leslie, p. 37) Constable also found this dewy freshness in Gainsborough:

> The landscape of Gainsborough is soothing, tender, and affecting. The stillness of noon, the depths of twilight, and the dews and pearls of the morning, are all to be found on the canvases of this most benevolent and kindhearted man. (quoted in Leslie, p. 322)

Constable writes often of the brilliance in his own paintings. According to Leslie, "[Constable] speaks of the qualities at which he chiefly aimed in his pictures,--'light--dews--breezes--bloom--and freshness; not one of which', he adds, 'has yet been perfected on the canvas of any painter in the world'" (Leslie, p. 218). Constable's letter to Mr. Purton illustrates his focus on brilliance: "I am glad you encourage me with 'Stoke'. What say you to a summer morning? July or August, at eight or nine o'clock, after a slight shower during the night, to

enhance the dews in the shadowed part of the picture, under

'Hedge-row elms and hillocks green'" (Leslie, p. 250). Similarly, writing of his "Boat-building," Constable indicates that he saw and painted brilliance: "'while just beyond it the river Stour glitters in the still sunshine of a hot summer's day'" (Leslie, p. 49). Similarly, "My [Lock on the Stour] is liked. . . and its light cannot be put out, because it is the light of nature, the mother of all that is valuable in poetry, painting, or anything else where an appeal to the soul is required. . . . Perhaps the sacrifices I make for lightness and brightness are too great, but these things are the essence of landscape, and my extreme is better than white-lead and oil, and dado painting" (Leslie, p. 121). And again, "'My [Boat Passing a Lock] is now on my easel; it is silvery, windy, and delicious; all health, and the absence of everything stagnant'" (Leslie, p. 141).

Similarly, Leslie writes of Constable's brilliance in "Arundel Mill and Castle": "in that silvery brightness of effect which was chief aim with him in the latter years of his life, it is not surpassed by any production of his pencil" (Leslie, p. 267). Finally, at an exhibition in Paris one Frenchman was overheard to say of Constable's white specks, "'Look at these landscapes by an Englishman,--the ground appears to be covered with dew'" (Leslie, p. 132).

Constable's discovery of Rubens in 1804 was important in his development of brilliance. In the "Editor's Preface"

to the biography (1951), Jonathan Mayne states that Farington records Constable's enthusiastic 1804 discovery of Rubens' "Chateau de Steen" in his Dairy (Leslie, p. x). Mayne then perceives a subsequent advance in Constable's use of chiaroscuro in the 1806 Lake District paintings: "But enough [of his early, formative period--roughly 1800-1812] remains to show a very marked access of power and perception in the lake-district drawings and water-colours of 1806 over the more timid, if delicate, Derbyshire drawings of 1801" (Leslie, p. ix). Leslie says much the same thing as Mayne: "The sketches he made [in Derbyshire in 1801], like those at Helmingham, are slight and general. They are washed in one tint only, and with no attempt at the beautiful finish or force of chiaroscuro seen in his later studies" (Leslie, p. 11), and he adds:

> He spent about two months among the English lakes and mountains [Westmoreland and Cumberland], where he made a great number of sketches. . . . They abound in grand and solemn effects of light, shade, and colour, but from these studies he never painted any considerable picture, for his mind was formed for the enjoyment of a different class of landscape. (Leslie, p. 18)

Noyes goes a step further and asserts a Wordsworthian influence--with respect to "light in motion"--resulting from the Lake District trip:

> On a sketching trip to the Lake Country in 1806, Constable appears to have been much impressed with Wordsworth and as a result of their meeting to have put into practice a new daring in style to capture light in motion at the poetic moment of truth. (p. 83)

Other lessons on brightness came from Mr. West:

> In your skies, for instance, always aim at brightness, although there are states of the atmosphere in which the sky itself is not bright. I do not mean that you are not to paint solemn or lowering skies, but even in the darkest effects there should be brightness. Your darks should look like the darks of silver, not of lead or of slate. (quoted in Leslie, p. 14)

Constable's brilliance took an extreme form as he developed. It was sometimes called "Constable's snow" or "Constable's whitewash." Of the adverse critical reception of this idiosyncratic "snow" Leslie writes: "In the pursuit of this indispensable quality, and of that brightness in nature which baffles all the ordinary processes of painting, and which it is hardly possible to unite with smoothness of surface, he was led by degrees into a peculiar mode of execution, which too much offended those who were unable to see the look of nature it gave at the proper distance" (Leslie, p. 207). That this "snow" interfered with his sales is indicated by his need to accommodate the buyers:

> I have got my picture into a very beautiful state; I have kept my brightness without my spottiness, and I have preserved God Almighty's daylight, which is enjoyed by all mankind, excepting only the lovers of old dirty canvas, perished pictures at a thousand guineas each, cart grease, tar, and snuff of candle. (p. 240, Leslie) [That this reference to "God Almighty" is not comparable to Wordsworth's "moving spirit" is dealt with in the next section.]

Similarly, Constable writes, "' . . . I have been very busy with Mr. Vernon's picture. Oiling out, making out, polishing, scraping, [et]c., seem to have agreed with it exceedingly. The 'sleet' and 'snow' have disappeared, leaving in their places, silver, ivory, and a little gold'" (Leslie, p. 247).

Constable realized that his brilliance had taken an extreme form when he wrote, "'I have filled my head with certain notions of freshness--sparkle--brightness--till it has influenced my practice in no small degree, [and] is in fact taking the place of truth so invidious is manner [mannerism] in all things'" (Rosenthal, p. 218). Rosenthal also comments on Constable's extreme use of white paint to express reflecting lights:

> In the remainder of his description Constable claimed that concern with 'lightness and brightness' necessitated his stylistic extremism. The copious application of white (again something to which connoisseurs might have objected) was presumably to achieve an effect of the painting surface comprising a multiplicity of reflecting surfaces, their effect mimicking that of the 'light of nature' which 'cannot be put out'. Constable probably intended to recreate something like the impression of broken sunlight on any landscape, hence the abstracted character of his style. This, however, depends on our having understood the letter correctly. (p. 156)

This brilliance was so important to Constable that he called attention to it by printing with his titles in exhibition catalogs illustrative lines from the poets. To "Hadleigh Castle" he added the following lines from Thomson's "Summer" [Italics mine]:

> The desert joys
> Wildly, through all his melancholy bounds,
> Rude ruins glitter; and the briny deep,
> Seen from some pointed promontory's top,
> Far to the blue horizon's utmost verge,
> Restless, reflects a floating gleam.
> (Leslie, p. 176)

Missing this clue to the painting's brilliance, a fellow artist "told Constable its foreground was too cold, and taking his palette from him, he passed a strong glazing of asphaltum all over that part of the picture, and while this was going on, Constable, who stood behind him in some degree of alarm, said to me 'there goes all my dew'" (Leslie, p. 177).

Constable's picturesque splendour needs no verification. Rosenthal, for one, covers Claude's influence on Constable, beginning in 1802 (pp. 34 ff). My description of Claudean splendour in Chapter 4 also applies to Constable's Claudean distances. A verbal example of Constable's life-long appreciation of Claude's splendour occurs in his Hampstead lecture (1833): "'Sweetness and amenity reign through every creation of his pencil; but his chief power consisted in uniting splendour with repose, warmth with freshness, and dark with light'" (Leslie, p. 298).

Thus, Constable's paintings illustrate the picturesque massing, indistinct line, brilliance and splendour described by Gilpin, Price, and Knight. Moreover, both Wordsworth's and Constable's brilliance becomes exaggerated or mannered

in their later works, such as The Excursion and "Hadleigh Castle."

Motion

Like Wordsworth's picturesque poetry, Constable's paintings express movement: "'My [Boat Passing a Lock] is now on my easel; it is silvery, windy, and delicious; all health, and the absence of everything stagnant'" (Leslie, p. 141). Like Wordsworth with his moving lights and shadows, Constable creates motion through chiaroscuro. In his Introduction to English Landscape Constable writes of capturing chiaroscuro's "evanescent Exhibitions which are ever occurring in the changes of external Nature":

> In some of these subjects of Landscape an attempt has been made to arrest the more abrupt and transient appearances of the CHIAR'OSCURO IN NATURE; to shew its effect in the most striking manner, to give "to one brief moment caught from fleeting time", a lasting and sober existence, and to render permanent many of those splendid but evanescent Exhibitions, which are ever occurring in the changes of external Nature. (quoted in Beckett, p. 10)

And in his fourth lecture at the Royal Institute, Constable states that "the most sublime productions of the pencil" are "a few of [nature's] evanescent effects":

> Yet, in reality, what are the most sublime productions of the pencil but selections of some of the forms of nature, and copies of a few of her evanescent effects; and this is the result, not of

> inspiration, but of long and patient study, under the direction of much good sense. (quoted in Leslie, p. 323)

Thus, "the more abrupt and transient appearances of the CHIAR'OSCURO IN NATURE" are those of movement.

Mr. West taught Constable about chiaroscuro's movement, as Leslie records:

> [Mr West] showed Constable how he might improve the chiaroscuro by some additional touches of light between the stems and branches of the trees, saying, "Always remember, sir, that light and shadow never stand still." Constable said it was the best lecture, because a practical one, on chiaroscuro he ever heard. (Leslie, p. 14)

Titian's light-produced movement in "Peter Martyr" also impressed Constable:

> "It is striking," said Constable, "to observe with what consummate skill the painter, like a great musician, has varied his touch and execution from slow movements to those of extreme rapidity. Thus the quick and vivid sparks of light near and upon the assassin's arm, hand, and sword, give inconceivable energy to his action, and contrast finely with the solemn quiet of the retiring forest." [Italics mine] (Leslie, p. 305)

Like Titian, Constable made motion the chief aim of his "light--dews--breezes--bloom--and freshness" (Leslie, p. 218). He describes light's motion in his engraving of "Spring" in English Landscape: In the "bright and animated days of the early year," when "at noon large garish clouds" "by their motion caus[e] that playful change so much desired by the painter whose

> Light and shade alternate, warmth and cold,
> And bright and dewy clouds, and vernal
> show'rs,
> And all the fine variety of things.
> (Beckett, p. 14)

Constable thus calls attention to this motion with poetry: The "large garish clouds" "by their motion" cause the "alternat[ion]" of "Light and shade," "bright and dewy clouds," and "warmth and cold," i.e., the "variety of things."

In addition to producing motion, chiaroscuro produces characteristic picturesque roughness. Leslie writes that Constable achieved this roughness through chiaroscuro "at whatever cost":

> "I was always determined," he said, "that my pictures should have chiaroscuro, if they had nothing else." In the pursuit of this indispensable quality, and of that brightness in nature which baffles all the ordinary processes of painting, and which it is hardly possible to unite with smoothness of surface, he was led by degrees into a peculiar mode of execution, which too much offended those who were unable to see the look of nature it gave at the proper distance. In the "Waterloo Bridge" he had indulged in the vagaries of the palette knife (which he used with great dexterity) to an excess. The subject challenged a comparison with Canaletti, the precision of whose execution is wonderful, and the comparison was made to Constable's great disadvantage; even his friend, Mr. Stothard, shook his head and said, "Very unfinished, sir", and the picture was generally pronounced a failure. It was a glorious failure, however; I have seen it often since it was exhibited, and I will venture to say that the noonday splendour of its colour would make almost any work of Canaletti, if placed beside it, look like moonlight. . . .It might be at this time that he wrote what I found on a scrap of paper among his memoranda: "My art flatters nobody by

> imitation, it courts nobody by smoothness, it tickles nobody by petiteness. . . ." (Leslie, pp. 207-208)

Thus, Constable's indistinctness prevented "smoothness of surface" and produced an "unfinished" roughness in its stead. Furthermore, this roughness contributes to the merging of objects, to which Constable may be referring in his remarks on the connection of objects and backgrounds. Leslie writes,

> . . . I have often heard Constable say, that he "never could look at any object unconnected with a background or other objects", and he thought the students might very advantageously to themselves be taught at an early age to look at nature in this way. (Leslie, p. 262)

In any case, the visible merger of objects in Constable's paintings produces organic unity, of which Mr. Purton writes:

> In looking . . . at such faithful transcripts of nature as are exhibited in the landscapes of Constable, it would be difficult to point out any one quality or excellence which pre-eminently distinguishes them; and perhaps it will be found that this oneness or individuality constitutes their principal charm: one pervading animus, one singleness of intention runs through the whole; and this, it may be observed, has been pronounced on the best authority the sine qua non in poetical composition:
>
> "Denique sit quidvis simplex duntaxat et unum." ["In a word, it may be what you will, only let it be simple (or rather single) and one."--HORACE on the Art of Poetry.]
>
> Whether he portray the solemn burst of the approaching tempest--the breezy freshness of morning--or the deep stillness of a summer noon--every object represented, from the grandest masses to the smallest plant or spray, seem instinct with, as it were, and breathing the very

> spirit of the scene. His figures, too, seem naturally called forth by, and form part of, the landscape: we never ask whether they are well placed, there they are, and unless they choose to move on, there they must remain. His quiet lanes and covert nooks never serve to introduce a romantic or sentimental episode to divide, not heighten the interest; all is made subservient to the one object in view, the embodying a pure apprehension of natural effect. Hence it is that the true lover of nature admires not at sight the beauty of the lines, or the truth of colouring displayed in his works; his first impulse is, as with Fuseli, to call for his umbrella, or with Bannister, he feels the breeze blowing on his face. [Italics mine] (Leslie, pp. 288-89)

Thus, Constable's merging, moving objects, "instinct with, as it were, and breathing the very spirit of the scene," create Woelfflin's painterly movement: "the painterly movement is not longer borne by the separate objects in the picture. It lies like a breath over the picture now at rest" (Woelfflin, p. 27).

Incorporeal Space

The interobjective space which Constable creates with his picturesque style resembles that of Wordsworth, except that Constable does not breathe into this space a moving being like Wordsworth does. Constable explains this space in his third lecture at the Royal Institute:

> Chiaroscuro is by no means confined to dark pictures; the works of Cuyp, though generally light, are full of it. It may be defined as that power which creates space; we find it everywhere, and at all times in nature; opposition, union, light, shade, reflection, and refraction, all contribute to it. (quoted in Leslie, p. 316)

Instead of a non-empirical presence--a numen called Nature--residing in this picturesque space, the nature Constable addresses is the conventional--almost medieval--personification of the natural world: "No arrogant man was ever permitted to see nature in all her beauty" (Leslie, p. 327), and "our Maker is most seen in his work" (Beckett, p. 73). Unlike Wordsworth's "living voice" of nature--which belongs to a spirit moving in the landscape and whose home is in the "light of setting suns"--the "hand" of nature which Constable sees (Beckett, p. 13) is merely a figure of speech.

Again unlike Wordsworth, Constable did not have the desire to become like a force of nature and move through the landscape. Instead, he approved of merely identifying one's feelings with nature, quoting "'from Thomson's Seasons the sixteen introductory lines to the 'Winter' as a beautiful instance of the poet identifying his own feelings with external nature'" (Leslie, p. 328). Thus, Constable knew from the beginning what Wordsworth learned eventually: that the landscape artist could only love, study, and imitate nature, not be like nature:

> [The student of Landscape would] seek his reward in the delights resulting from the love and study of Nature, and in his successful attempts to imitate her in the features of the scenery with which he is surrounded; so that in whatever spot he may be placed, he shall be impressed with the beauty and majesty of Nature under all her appearances, and, thus, be led to adore the hand that has, with such lavish beneficence, scattered

> the principles of enjoyment and happiness throughout every department of the Creation. (quoted in Beckett, p. 13)

Unlike Wordsworth, Constable "read" nature, not as a numen directly communicating with him, but as one would read an inscription: "The art of seeing nature is a thing almost as much to be acquired as the art of reading the Egyptian hieroglyphics" (Leslie, p. 327). Wordsworth, on the other hand, perceived "The common face of Nature [speaking to him]/Rememberable things" (VI, 18).

Again unlike Wordsworth, Constable referred to God as nature's creator from the beginning of his career, while Wordsworth referred to God and creation primarily in his later poetry. For example, in The Excursion Wordsworth frequently connects the Presence and Nature with the God that created them. Constable's early orthodoxy, on the other hand, is typically expressed in his last landscape lecture at Hampstead: "'Our wisest and best teachers, the scriptures themselves teach us, that our Maker is most seen in his work--and best adored in our wonder and admiration of them'" (Beckett, p. 73).

The difference between Constable's numen-less nature and Wordsworth's non-empirical presence is revealed by their differing attitude toward breezes, clouds, lights, and shadows. Constable's interest in "light--dews--breezes--bloom--and freshness" was mimetic; unlike Wordsworth's "Gleams like the flashing of a shield," they were not teaching him moral lessons for mankind. At

most, he felt that these natural phenomena desired that he imitate them for their own sakes: "'the trees and clouds all ask me to do something like them'" (Rosenthal, p. 218). Wordsworth, on the other hand, is interested in "the light of setting suns," "the round ocean," "the living air," and "the blue sky" because they are the locus of "A presence that disturbs [him] with the joy/Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime/Of something far more deeply interfused" (II, 262). The breezes are the voice of this Presence, and as a poet, Wordsworth wants to be the mouthpiece for this voice. Constable, therefore, is interested in empirical nature for its own sake, whereas Wordsworth sees empirical nature as an intermediary between man and the non-empirical, an intermediary whose role Wordsworth wants to usurp as poet.

Constable's Paintings and Wordsworth's Poetry

So far it is apparent that Constable and Wordsworth resemble one another in their visual picturesque style and in their extensive use of brilliance. Furthermore, both poet and painter differ from their predecessors by applying this style to ordinary landscape and humble subjects. Constable states in the Introduction to English Landscape that "The immediate aim of the Author in this publication is to increase the interest for, and promote the study of, the Rural Scenery of England. . . ." (Beckett, p. 9). In fact, Constable aimed to do for English landscape painting what

poets had done for English landscape description. Presumably alluding to picturesque poetry, he stated in a draft for English Landscape that "it would be most gratifying to him if he could flatter himself that his humble efforts in Art, should in any degree tend to place English Scenery on the same footing in respect to Landscape as that on which it has long stood with regard to Poetry" (Beckett, p. 83).

Like Wordsworth's new poetic diction was to do for poetry, Constable's new picturesque landscape was to eliminate all remnants of the "Classical Style" which at that time monopolized landscape painting: "It is surely to be regretted that the scenes with which we are surrounded . . . should be either overlooked, or else rejected as unsuited to the Classical Style" (Beckett, p. 83).

To emphasize parallels with poetry, Constable often added landscape poetry excerpts to his titles, in both exhibition catalogs and English Landscape. Beckett explains Constable's practice as follows:

> So it is with the quotations from the poets, which are no mere literary embellishment. An intimate relationship between poetry and painting was an integral part of Constable's artistic creed: the aims of both were akin, and the painter should be able to suggest, by the delicacy and accuracy of his perception, something more than the outward semblance of his subject. (Beckett, p. 6)

To Constable, picturesque light and shade were one of painting's "poetic" qualities: "'chiaroscuro, colour, and composition, are all poetic qualities'" (Lecture III,

Beckett, p. 65). And if chiaroscuro were removed from a picturesque painting, the result would be as "coarse" and "mean" as certain painters in Flanders and Holland: "'in Flanders and Holland, the taste for the picturesque, when colour, chiaroscuro, and execution were gone, left only the coarse and the mean'" (Leslie, p. 311).

In view of Constable's desire to do for landscape painting what the poets had done for landscape poetry, we can compare Wordsworth and Constable to find just how similar their styles are. First, we observe that Constable's chiaroscuro resembles Wordsworth's. For instance, the titles in English Landscape remind us of scenes in Wordsworth's An Evening Walk (and in Gilpin's "On Landscape Painting") [Italics mine]:

LIST OF THE ENGRAVINGS

of Mr. Constable's English Landscape,

WITH THEIR ARRANGEMENT.

Frontispiece, Paternal House and Grounds of the Artist.--Evening.
Spring. East Bergholt Common, Hail Squalls.--Noon.
Sunset. Peasants returning homewards.
Noon.--The West and Fields, Hampstead.
Yarmouth Pier, Norfolk.--Morning Breeze.
Summer Morning.--The Vale of Dedham.
Summer Evening.--A Homestead, Cattle reposing.
Dell in the Woods of Helmingham Park.--Autumn.
Hampstead Heath, Stormy Noon.--Sand Diggers.
A Sea Beach, Brighton, Heavy Surf.--Windy Noon.
Stoke Church, by Neyland, Suffolk.--Rainbow at Noon.
River Stour, Suffolk, near Flatford Mill.--An Avenue.
Head of a Lock on the Stour.--Rolling Clouds.

> Mound of the City of Old Sarum.--Thunder Clouds.
> A Summerland, Rainy Day; Ploughmen.--Noon.
> Barges on the Stour: Gleams of Light on the-
> Meadows.
> A water mill, Dedham.--Burst of Light at Noon.
> Weymouth Bay, Dorset.--Tempestuous Evening.
> Summer Afternoon, Sunshine after a Shower.
> The Glebe Farm, Green Lane; Girl at a Spring.
> The Nore, Hadleigh Castle.--Morning, after a
> Stormy Night.
> Vignette, Hampstead Heath.--Labourer returning.
> (Beckett, p. 11)

The chiaroscuro in Constable's descriptions of his own engravings thus resembles Wordsworth's. For instance, Constable's "Light and Shadow" in "East Bergholt, Suffolk" reminds us of Wordsworth's evening light and shadow in "Expostulation and Reply." Constable:

> In this plate the endeavour has been to give, by richness of Light and Shadow, an interest to a subject otherwise by no means attractive. The broad still lights of a Summer evening, with the solemn and far-extended shadows cast round by the intervening objects, small portions of them only and of the landscape gilded by the setting sun, cannot fail to give interest to the most simple or barren subject, and even to mark it with pathos and effect. (Beckett, p. 12)

Constable's "broad still lights of a Summer evening, with the solemn and far-extended shadows" are similar to those implied in Wordsworth's "Expostulation and Reply":

> The sun, above the mountains' head,
> A freshening lustre mellow
> Through all the long green fields has spread,
> His first sweet evening yellow.
> (IV, 57)

We must note that the "evening yellow" would not be noticeable without the contrasting shadows of the "mountains' head." Similarly, Constable's "small portions" of "intervening objects" "gilded by the setting sun" remind us of Wordsworth's "gilded turf," "glittering rocks, and "lighted fane" in An Evening Walk:

> Where oaks o'er hand the road the radiance shoots
> On tawny earth, wild weeds, and twisted roots;
> The Druid stones their lighted fane unfold
> And all the babbling brooks are liquid gold.
> (ll. 169-174)

Brilliance and massed shadow in Constable's "Spring" is comparable to that in Wordsworth's "Written in March: While Resting on the Bridge At the Foot of Brother's Water." Constable writes:

> This plate may perhaps give some idea of one of those bright and animated days of the year, when all nature bears so exhilarating an aspect; when at noon large garish clouds, surcharged with hail or sleet, sweep with their broad cool shadows the fields, woods, and hills; and by the contrast of their depths and bloom enhance the value of the vivid greens and yellows, so peculiar to this season; heightening also their brightness, and by their motion causing that playful change so much desired by the painter of
>
> > Light and shade alternate, warmth and cold,
> > And bright and dewy clouds, and vernal show'rs,
> > And all the fine variety of things.
> > (Beckett, p. 14)

The spring brightness of Constable's "bright and animated days" corresponds to that of Wordsworth, whose "lake doth glitter,/[And whose] green field sleeps in the sun."

However, in these spring scenes, Constable stresses the sudden return of snow-bearing nimbus clouds, while Wordsworth stresses the departure of the snow and the coming of fair-weather clouds:

> Like an army defeated
> The snow hath retreated,
> And now doth fare ill
> On the top of the bare hill;
> The Ploughboy is whooping--anon--anon:
> There's joy in the mountains;
> There's life in the fountains;
> Small clouds are sailing,
> Blue sky prevailing;
> The rain is over and gone!
>
> (II, 220)

Both scenes depict moving clouds--"sweep[ing]" and "sailing"--and snow: Constable's aereal snow "sweep[s]" the earth from the clouds it forms, while Wordsworth's terrestrial snow has melted and "retreated." Furthermore, Constable's "playful change" is echoed by Wordsworth's "Ploughboy" "whooping" because "The rain is over and gone!" Finally, Thomson's lines reinforce this motion with the "alternat[ion]" of light, shade, and bright and dewy clouds, i.e.,"all the fine variety of things."

Chiaroscuro is again comparable between Constable's description of "Stoke by Neyland, Suffolk" and Wordsworth's northward view of fields and hills in <u>The Excursion</u>. Constable:

> The effect of light and shadow on the sky and landscape are such as would be observed when looking to the northward at noon; that time of the day being decidedly marked by the direction of the

> shadows and the sun shining full on the south side of the Church. (quoted in Beckett, p. 21)

Constable emphasizes this light by quoting Thomson's "Summer":

> Through the lighten'd air
> A higher lustre and a clearer calm
> Diffusive tremble.

Similarly, Wordsworth combines the light effects of both Constable and Thomson:

> [B]ut all the northern downs,
> In clearest air ascending, showed far off
> A surface dappled o'er with shadows flung
> From brooding clouds; shadows that lay in spots
> Determined and unmoved, with steady beams
> Of bright and pleasant sunshine interposed.
> (V, i, 7)

In these two northern noon views, Thomson's "diffusive[ly] tremb[ling]" "clearer calm" and "higher lustre" illustrate Constable's "effect of light and shadow on the sky and landscape." Both parallel Wordsworth's "surface dappled o'er with shadows flung" "in clearest air" "with steady beams/Of bright and pleasant sunshine interposed." Thomson's linearity makes him convenient to use for illustrative purposes, since his linear separation allows his lines to be extracted from their landscape. Wordsworth's picturesque interweaving, on the other hand, makes his lines too integrated with their mountainous landscape to be extracted to illustrate Constable's East Anglia landscapes.

The broad lights and shadows of Wordsworth's evening storm scene from Descriptive Sketches finds its counterpart in Constable's "Old Sarum." However, where Wordsworth concentrated on calm splendour, Constable concentrates on agitated brilliance:

> Sudden and abrupt appearances oflight, thunder clouds, wild autumnal evenings, solemn and shadowy twilights, "flinging half an image on the straining sight", with variously tinted clouds, dark, cold and gray, or ruddy and bright, with transitory gleams of light; even conflicts of the elements, to heighten, if possible, the sentiment which belongs to a subject so awful and impressive. (Beckett, p. 24)

Compare Wordsworth:

> 'Tis storm; and hid in mist from hour to hour
> All day the floods a deeper murmur pour,
> And mournful sounds, as of a Spirit lost,
> Pipe wild along the hollow-blustering coast,
> 'Till the Sun walking on his western field
> Shakes from behind the clouds his flashing shield.
> Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
> Glances the fire-clad eagle's wheeling form,
> Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine
> The wood-crown'd cliffs that o'er the lake
> recline;
> Wide o'er the Alps a hundred streams unfold,
> At once to pillars turn'd that flame with gold.
> Behind his sail the peasant strives to shun
> The West that burns like one dilated sun.
> Where in a mighty crucible expire
> The mountains, glowing hot, like coals of fire.
> (ll. 332-347)

Constable's "Sudden and abrupt appearances of light" and "transitory gleams of light" resemble Wordsworth's "glowing" prospect which suddenly appeared--"Shakes from behind the clouds"--and would as suddenly disappear "like coals of fire."

The chiaroscuro of "a cloudy or stormy day at noon" in Constable's "Dedham Mill (A Fragment)" resembles the "dim religious groves" in Wordsworth's Descriptive Sketches. Constable:

> The subject of this print is little more than assemblage of material calculated to produce a rich Chiar'oscuro, and is noticed solely with that view. A cloudy or stormy day at noon with partial bright and humid gleam of light over meadow scenery, and near the banks of rivers with trees, boats and buildings, are most desirable objects with a painter, who delights in Colour and Light and Shade. . . . as it never fails to give importance to the most trivial scenery. (Beckett, p. 26)

Compare Constable's "partial bright and humid gleam of light" with Wordsworth's "dim religious groves" and "sails" "Bright'ning the gloom where thick the forests stoop":

> The cots, those dim religious groves embow'r,
> . . . . . .
> Each with his household boat beside the door,
> Whose flaccid sails in forms fantastic droop,
> Bright'ning the gloom where thick the forests
> stoop.
> (ll. 124-129)

Constable's "rich Chiar'oscuro" of meadows, river banks, trees, boats and buildings appears also in Wordsworth's "flaccid sails" "Bright'ning the gloom where thick the forests stoop" beside the "cots" "embow'r[ed]" in their "dim religious groves."

But perhaps brilliance is the most striking parallel between Constable and Wordsworth. For example, the brilliance in Wordsworth's May Day scene in The Excursion

corresponds to that in Constable's "Summer Morning": Constable's "lights"--"silvery and sparkling"--and "landscape 'gemmed with the morning dew'" correspond to Wordsworth's "glitter," "glistened," and "silver steam/Of dews fast melting on their leafy boughs" "By the strong sunbeams smitten." Constable:

> Nature is never seen, in this climate at least, to greater perfection than at about nine o'clock in the mornings of July and August, when the sun has gained sufficient strength to give splendour to the landscape, "still gemmed with the morning dew", without its oppressive heat; and it is still more delightful if vegetation has been refreshed with a shower during the night.
>
> It may be well to mention the different appearances which characterize the Morning and Evening effects. The dews and moisture which the earth has imbibed during the night cause a greater depth and coolness in the shadows of the Morning; also, from the same cause, the lights are at that time more silvery and sparkling; the lights and shadows of Evening are of a more saffron or ruddy hue, vegetation being parched during the day from the drought and heat. (Beckett, p. 17)

Now Wordsworth's dewy morning:

> Beyond the limits of the shadow cast
> By the broad hill, glistened upon our sight
> That gay assemblage. Round them and above,
> Glitter, with dark recesses interposed,
> Casement, and cottage-roof, and stems of trees
> Half-veiled in vapoury cloud, the silver steam
> Of dews fast melting on their leafy boughs
> By the strong sunbeams smitten. Like a mast
> Of gold, the Maypole shines; as if the rays
> Of morning, aided by exhaling dew,
> With gladsome influence could re-animate
> The faded garlands dangling from its sides.
> (IV, ii, 46)

Where Constable's reflections are "silvery," Wordsworth's reflections are both "silver" and "gold." Shadows also have their counterparts in these lines: Constable's "shadows of the Morning" match Wordsworth's "shadow cast/By the broad hill" and "dark recesses."

As the above lines illustrate, Wordsworth's sparkles of light resemble Constable's "snow." Constable's "snow" again comes to mind in The Excursion with Wordsworth's frosty picture of "thousand thousand diamond drops" reflected "like a mountain built of silver light":

> --How vast the compass of this theatre,
> Yet nothing to be seen but lovely pomp
> And silent majesty; the birch-tree woods
> Are hung with thousand thousand diamond drops
> Of melted hoar-frost, every tiny knot
> In the bare twigs, each little budding-place
> Case with its several bead, what myriads there
> Upon one tree, while all the distant grove
> That rises to the summit of the steep
> Shows like a mountain built of silver light
> See yonder the same pageant, and again
> Beyold the universal imagery
> Inverted, all its sun-bright features touched
> As with the garnish, and the glass of dreams.
> (V, 332)

Leslie documents Constable's contact with The Excursion in 1823. Constable had written, "'[Sir George Beaumont] read a sermon, and a good deal of Wordsworth's 'Excursion'. Some of the landscape descriptions in it are very beautiful'" (Leslie, p. 110).

Brilliance and splendour combined are comparable in "Hadleigh Castle" and "Elegaic Stanzas: VI." Both resemble a Claudian landscape: For instance, Claude's "Pastoral Landscape" with a round Roman tower on the left and a river

flowing into the distance on the right, connected by a cowherd driving his cows from left to right.[10] However, when we focus our attention on the actual description of Peele Castle in "Elegaic Stanzas: VI," we see splendour and brilliance combine realistically, as they do in Constable, and not exaggeratedly, as they do in Claude, whom the narrator would have imitated ten years before. Compare Peele Castle as he remembers it:

> I was thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile!
> Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee:
> I saw thee every day; and all the while
> Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.
>
> So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
> So like, so very like, was day to day!
> Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
> It trembled, but it never passed away.
> (IV, 258-259)

Now the Claudean exaggeration with which he would have painted it ten years previously:

> Ah! THEN, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
> To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
> The light that never was, on sea or land,
> The consecration, and the Poet's dream;
>
> I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile
> Amid a world how different from this!
> Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
> On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.
>
> Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house divine
> Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;--
> Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
> The very sweetest had to thee been given.

> A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
> Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
> No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
> Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.
> (IV, 259)

In "Elegaic Stanzas: VI," Wordsworth thus describes his advance in taste from Claude's exaggerated picturesque splendour to a more realistic Pricean picturesque splendour. Wordsworth's style thus began with the exaggerated "picturesque" of Claude and gradually evolved into the "painterly" style with which Constable began. Woelfflin describes this style change in Rembrandt:

> There is obviously a picturesqueness more inherent in the object, and there is temporarily no objection to denoting this as decorative picturesque. But it does not cease where the picturesqueness of the object ceases. Even the late Rembrandt, to whom picturesque things and picturesque arrangements had become indifferent, remains painterly-decorative. But the painterly movement is not longer borne by the separate objects in the picture. It lies like a breath over the picture now at rest. (p. 27)

The Transition from Linear to Picturesque

We must ask why Constable chose Thomson to illustrate his picturesque paintings, and not Wordsworth or Gilpin. A partial answer may lie in Thomson's position on the verge of the picturesque, which appealed to Constable. We have already examined Thomson's linearity in Chapter 1. We can probe Thomson's poetry further to observe just where the "crossing over" from the linear to the picturesque would

take place. Thomson is beginning to add to his linear style the sparkles and tremblings which will later become picturesque brilliance and movement. But with their separate objects and stasis, the lines from his "Summer" which Constable added to "Hadleigh Castle" are basically linear:

> The desert joys
> Wildly, through all his melancholy bounds,
> Rude ruins glitter; and the briny deep,
> Seen from some pointed promontory's top,
> Far to the blue horizon's utmost verge,
> Restless, reflects a floating gleam.
> (quoted from Gadney, p. 86)

The beginnings of motion are suggested by "glitter," "floating gleam," and "restless" ocean. Nevertheless, the absence of shadow--stated or implied--as well as the separation and resultant stasis of objects--with commas and semicolons--bars these lines from the precincts of the picturesque.

A similar scene from Gilpin, on the other hand, shows picturesque light/dark contrast (chiaroscuro) and motion:

> Far up yon river, opening to the sea,
> Just where the distant coast extends a curve,
> A lengthen'd train of sea-fowl urge their flight.
> Observe their files! In what exact array
> The dark battalion floats, distinctly seen
> Before yon silver cliff: Now, now, they reach
> That lonely beacon; now are lost again
> In yon dark cloud. How pleasing is the sight!
> (ll. 607-614)

Whereas Thomson's scene contains no light-dark contrast or shadow, Gilpin's scene contrasts "dark" "sea-fowl" and "yon

dark cloud" with "yon silver cliff." If contrasting shadow were present, Thomson's "glitter" and "gleam" would likewise correspond to picturesque brilliance.

Thomson's hovering between stasis and motion is another indication of his transition between linear and picturesque. Thomson's stasis appears in nouns, such as "bounds" and "verge," which are also separated by commas and semicolons. Thomson's motion, however, appears in adjective-noun combinations, such as "restless" ocean and "floating gleam." Gilpin's landscape, on the other hand, reveals extensive picturesque movement as well as merging objects. For example, the "coast" "extends a curve," the "sea-fowl" "urge their flight" "before yon silver cliff," and the "battalion" "floats," "now" "reach[ing]" the "lonely beacon" and "now" "lost again/In yon dark cloud." Unlike Thomson's "now," which refers to the movement of the viewer's eyes over the canvas, Gilpin's "now" refers to the birds themselves, "moving" in the scene.

Constable's "Hadleigh Castle," however, resembles Gilpin's lines and not Thomson's: unlike Thomson, Constable paints contrast--dark sea birds against silvery clouds in the background and white birds against woodsy shadows in the foreground. Nevertheless, Constable's castle ruins and rocky foreground "glitter" like Thomson's "rude ruins," albeit with the silveriness of Gilpin's "silver cliff." Constable's chiaroscuro, therefore, goes beyond Thomson's mention of "glitter" and "floating gleam" to the light/dark

contrast (chiaroscuro) of Gilpin, Price, Knight, and Wordsworth.

Like Gilpin's objects, Constable's objects seem to move as their edges merge indistinguishably into one another. Constable's rough edges, therefore, go beyond Thomson's linearity to the rough edges of Gilpin and Wordsworth. This roughness of style put forward by Gilpin, Price, and Knight and put into practice by Constable and Wordsworth--through contrast, broken line, indistinct and merged forms, and inter-objective space--is formulated in Knight's plea for a picturesque style in The Landscape, A Didactic Poem, (1794):[11]

> But here again, Ye rural nymphs, oppose
> Nature's and Art's confederated foes!
> Break their fell scythes, that would these
> beauties shave.
> And sink their iron rollers in the wave!
> Your favourite plants, and native haunts protect,
> In wild obscurity, and rude neglect;
> Or teach him to place, and not remove the stone
> On yonder bank, with moss and fern o'er grown;
> To cherish, not mow down the weeds that crop
> Along the shore, or overhand the steep;
> To break, not level, the slow-rising ground,
> And guard, not cut, the fern that shades it round.
> (ll. 186-199)

As my italics indicate, Knight begs that edges be concealed by vegetation in order to produce "obscurity." Similarly, in the "Epistle to Lord Burlington" Pope calls for concealed boundaries:[12]

> Let not each beauty ev'rywhere be spy'd
> When half the skill is decently to hide.

> He gains all points who pleasingly confounds
> Surprizes, varies and conceals the Bounds.
> (ll. 53-56)

But despite their good advice, neither Knight nor Pope concealed the poetic boundaries in his couplets. The distinct boundaries produced by their commas and couplets indicate that these poets had not considered applying these principles to poetry. When Wordsworth, however, did apply these principles to poetry, he achieved a revolution in poetic style. He obscured the edges of syntax and diction as well as of the objects he described. Wordsworth thus imbibed picturesque theory of painting and landscape gardening and used it ultimately to free poetry from the architectonic limitations of symmetry, balance, antithesis, and heroic couplets. As a result, Wordsworth freed spirit and motion from the a priori confines of line--whether it be serpentine, poetic, or painted. He was thus able to naturalize eighteenth-century imitation from the conceptual to the visual: He replaced ideal (linear) language--"what the mind knew"--with empirical (visual picturesque) language--"what the eye sees." Furthermore, during his development, he progressed from an objective to a subjective visual picturesque. By adding the associative picturesque to the visual picturesque, Wordsworth brought the picturesque back full circle into the mind--at a new picturesque/painterly level.

Constable's painting also puts into practice Knight's and Pope's dictum to "conceal the bounds." He did this, like Wordsworth and other picturesque painters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, by using visual (picturesque) representation instead of the conceptual (linear) representation which had continued to dominate official art theory in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[13] Constable was indignant, however, that the prevailing arbiters of artistic taste sanctioned the picturesque style as long as it imitated the canon of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century masters but forbad it with new landscape subjects. He thus deplores imitation of other paintings and favors the visual picturesque principle of the eye: "'What a sad thing it is that this lovely art is so wrested to its own destruction! Used only to blind our eyes, and to prevent us from seeing the sun shine--the fields bloom--the trees blossom--and from hearing the foliage rustle; while old--black--rubbed out and dirty canvases take the place of God's own works'" (Leslie, p. 218). Constable again indicates his visual orientation to painting when he writes, "'I find my time will be more taken up in <u>seeing</u> than in painting'" (Leslie, p. 9).

Constable frequently expresses his animosity to the conceptual mode of painting: painting what the mind knows. Criticizing contemporary art theory, Constable writes, "'it is all about <u>ideal art</u>, which in landscape is sheer nonsense, as they put it. Even Sir Joshua is not quite

clear in this'" (Leslie, p. 246). Similarly, he criticizes a contemporary for painting to the understanding and not with the eye and its chiaroscuro:

> This morning I have seen ----'s studies in Italy and Greece; temples, trees, statues, waterfalls, figures, etc., etc.; excellent of their kind, and done wholly for the understanding; bald, and naked,--nature divested of her chiaroscuro, which she never is under any circumstances, for we never see her but through a medium. Yet these things have a wonderful merit, and so has watchmaking. (quoted in Leslie, p. 195-96)

Due to his dislike of the linear style, Constable dislikes the return of outline in late eighteenth-century neo-classicism, and he criticizes James Barry and Jacques Louis David for their use of it. Of Barry, he writes:[14] "'Barry thought, to be great he must reject the attributes of painting; hence the iron-bound outline and brazen lights of his pictures in the Adelphi'" (Leslie, p. 274). Of David he writes, "'The style I have been describing was followed by that which sprung out of the Revolution, when David and his contemporaries exhibited their stern and heartless petrifactions of men and women,--with trees, rocks, tables, and chairs, all equally bound to the ground by a relentless outline, and destitute of chiaroscuro, the soul and medium of art'" (Second Lecture at the Royal Institute, Leslie, p. 313).

In contrast, Constable's rough edges were were not accepted by the artistic establishment, as Leslie writes: "In the pursuit of this indispensable quality, and of that

brightness in nature which baffles all the ordinary processes of painting, and which it is hardly possible to unite with smoothness of surface, he was led by degrees into a peculiar mode of execution, which too much offended those who were unable to see the look of nature it gave at the proper distance" (Leslie, pl 207).

Constable's roughness was unpopular because it went beyond that of his predecessors and was thus unrecognizable in terms of accepted norms: "'My pictures will never be popular,' he said, 'for they have no handling. But I do not see handling in nature'" (Leslie, p. 280).

Thus, Constable, like Wordsworth, had to create the taste with which to appreciate his work. Beckett writes of Constable's desire to change the rules of taste:

> To speak of Constable as being "regardless of the too confined rules of the art" might be only another way of putting the substance of the motto which he chose for his own manifesto, nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri [forced to obey the words of no master]. Yet this was hardly the point he wished to make. What the world needed to be told, in his opinion, was that an artist who observes nature for himself, with a mind unclouded by the conventional notions of the connoisseurs, is following the most important rule of all. (Beckett, p. 2)

Archdeacon Fisher recognized Constable's new style and encouraged Constable to print it:

> You are in possession of some very valuable and original matter on the subject of painting, particularly on the Poetry of the Art. I should be very sad to see this seed sown on some unvisited field where it would blossom in forgetfulness; while some theiving author, like a

> sparrow, would fly off with a sample [and] take the credit from you. (quoted in Beckett, p. 1)

This Constable did in English Landscape (1833), where he writes to the public: "'There was thus a didactic purpose behind [the prints], and this purpose needed to be explained in words'" (Beckett, p. 1). Elsewhere Constable refers to his "grand theory" (Leslie, p. 140). However, unlike Wordsworth's Preface to the Lyrical Ballads whose purpose finally succeeded during his lifetime, Constable's English Landscape did not succeed in creating a public taste for his picturesque landscapes until after his death.

Conclusion

This study has focused on light and shade, motion, and space as the characteristics of visual picturesque poetry and painting. It is now time to summarize these characteristics in Wordsworth and Constable. Wordsworth used picturesque light first as an ornament, then as a pagan, and finally as a spiritual gleam as he metamorphosed light/dark contrast into a "visionary gleam." Thus, he developed within the visual picturesque from the objective to the subjective point of view.

Wordsworth also put motion in his scenes, first giving it to individual objects and then diffusing it over the whole scene. He gradually gentled this motion and made it into a moving spirit, "a motion and a spirit that impels/All

thinking things, all objects of thought." Thus, in the inter-objective space created by his moving lights and merging edges, he discovered a Presence which was a "sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused." With age, however, he gave this spiritual Presence a more orthodox identity. Throughout this development, however, no matter what the emphasis--objective or subjective--Wordsworth integrated the empirical with the non-empirical, never replacing the empirical with the non-empirical, yet never considering the empirical by itself.

Constable, like Wordsworth, used light/dark contrast, or chiaroscuro, from the beginning of his career. Constable began with the subjective visual picturesque, however, and used it throughout his career. Early in his development he began using brilliance and splendour after studying painters like Rubens and Claude, knowing artists like West and Farington, and reading poets like Thomson and Wordsworth. Despite its unpopularity with the critics, brilliance became more and more evident in his later period. Like Wordsworth, Constable began with the visual picturesque and then added associative picturesque subjects. Constable, however, discarded the associative picturesque and returned to the visual picturesque as he developed. Unlike Wordsworth, Constable dealt always with the empirical, never creating a Wordsworthian non-empirical presence beyond empirical reality.

Wordsworth thus begins at the objective end of the visual picturesque spectrum and moves gradually to the subjective pole of Woelfflin's evolution from the "picturesque" to the" painterly." Constable, on the other hand, begins with the subjective pole. His picturesque motion always seems to "lie like a breath over the picture now at rest" (Woelfflin, p. 27). Thus, beginning in 1802, Constable had already benefited from the evolution of the picturesque as described by Woelfflin:

> What is commonly denoted as a picturesque theme is more or less only the preliminary stage to the higher forms of the painterly taste, and is historically of the greatest importance, for it is just in these more outward picturesque effects that the feeling for a completely painterly apprehension of the world seems to have developed. (Woelfflin, p. 27)

By his evolution from the objective to the subjective visual picturesque, Wordsworth helped bring about this "feeling for a completely painterly apprehension of the world."

Notes

[1]Reg Gadney, Constable and His World (New York: W. W. Norton Company, Inc., 1976), p. 25.

[2]Michael Rosenthal, Constable: The Painter and His Landscape (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

[3]Ibid., p. 63. Rosenthal finds that Constable "maintains the picturesque in his 1813 "Landscape, Boys Fishing."

[4] On the basis of Gilpin's dictum that "the 'loitering peasant' was more picturesque a subject than the 'industrious mechanic'" (p. 35), Rosenthal distinguishes between working and non-working peasants: i.e., scenes which show peasants not working are picturesque; scenes in which peasants are working are unpicturesque: "A plough is . . . a georgic symbol. It is also notably unpicturesque. The picturesque was a 'painterly' aesthetic, not one which drew force from areas beyond the pictorial'" (p. 78). On the basis of this definition, Rosenthal concludes that Claude, whose "peasantry dances, picnics, and lazily herds its cattle" is picturesque, while Constable's peasantry, when it "gets on with sowing the wheat," is unpicturesque (p. 86).

[5] Ibid., p. 41. Rosenthal makes the same observation: "Unlike Wordsworth, Constable had not felt himself beset by superior forces in the Lake District; did not find that he heard a 'strange utterance' in the wind, nor felt 'Gleams like the flashing of a shield' as 'the earth/And common face of Nature' spoke to him."

[6] Russell Noyes, Wordsworth and the Art of Landscape (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), pp. 68-69.

[7] Kenneth Clark, Landscape into Art (New York: Harper [and] Row, Publishers, 1979). [First printed in 1949.]

[8] C. R. Leslie, Memoirs of the Life of John Constable: Composed Chiefly of His Letters, 2nd ed. (London: The Phaidon Press, 1951), p. 207. [Second edition first published 1845.] In indented block quotations from Leslie, I have removed the quotation marks from Leslie's own quotations and have indicated that these are not Leslie's words by appending "(quoted in Leslie)." I have done the same when I quote R. B. Beckett's quotations in John Constable's Discourses (Ipswich, Suffolk: Suffolk Records Society, Vol. 14, 1970). To avoid needless repetition I have left the quotes double in my non-block quotations.

[9] Uvedale Price, Essays on the Picturesque.

[10] See Claude's "Pastoral Landscape," Figure 157 (no. 83) in Marcel Roethlisberger's Claude Lorraine: The Paintings, Vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961). Other landscapes which feature round towers on the left and a river flowing into a gleaming distance on the right can be found in Rosenthal's Constable: The Painter and His Landscape: for instance, Landscape: Narcissus on p.36 and Landscape: Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah on p. 84.

[11] Richard Payne Knight, The Landscape, A Didactic Poem. In Three Books (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1794), Book II.

[12]Alexander Pope, Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, ed. Aubrey Williams (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), p. 191.

[13]For a synopsis of eighteenth century British landscape painters see Luke Herrmann, British Landscape Painting of the Eighteenth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

[14]For a discussion of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century neo-classical taste, see David Watkin, Thomas Hope 1769-1831 and the Neo-Classical Idea, (London: John Murray, 1983), p. 175.

APPENDIX

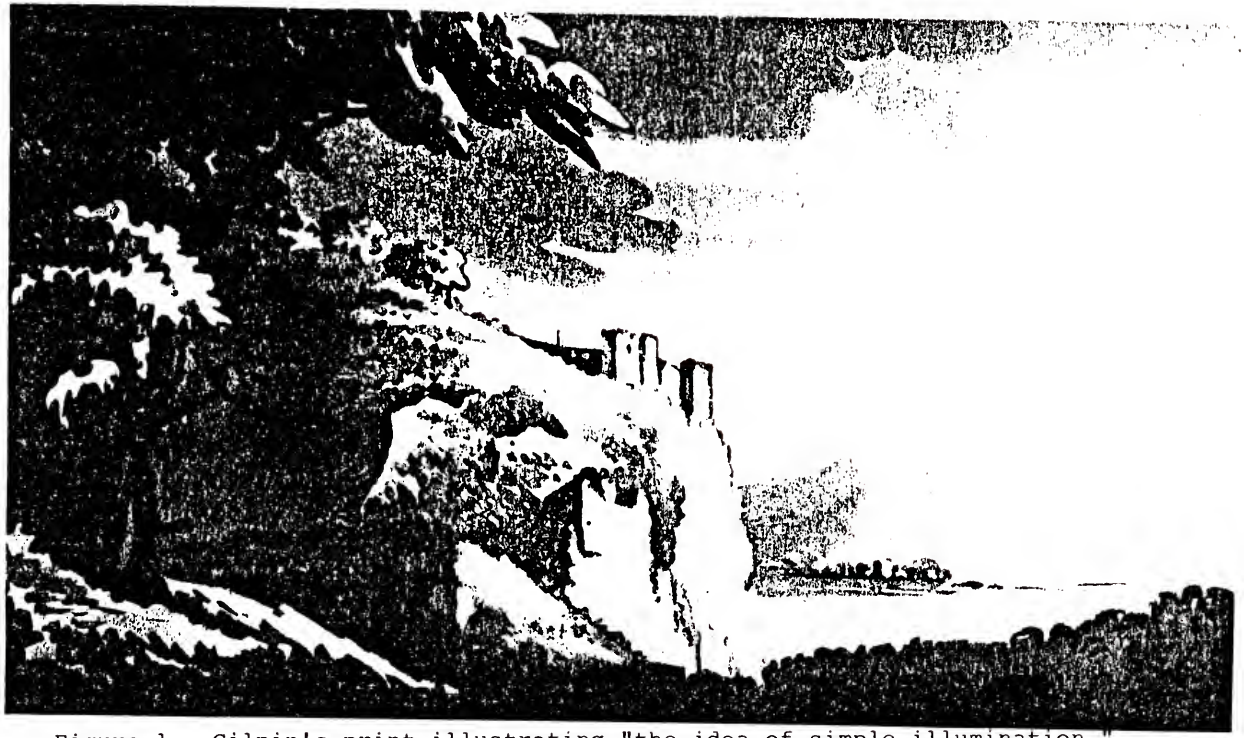

Figure 1. Gilpin's print illustrating "the idea of simple illumination. Source: William Gilpin, Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; On Picturesque Travel; and On Sketching Landscape (London: R. Blamire, 1792), p. 75.

Figure 2. Gilpin's print illustrating light thrown "more into a mass."
Source: Gilpin's Three Essays," p. 76.

Figure 3. Gilpin's print illustrating "the idea of gradation."
Source: Gilpin, Three Essays, p. 77.

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A native Iowan, Sandra Davis moved to Florida in 1966, where she received an M.A. in English in 1968 and an M.A. in classics in 1975. After teaching in public schools, she returned to the University of Florida to study for the Ph.D. in English. Wordsworth provided the focus for her interest in science, literature, and art history. She intends to continue her career in scholarly writing in the areas of aesthetics, psychology, and literature. Complementary interests include technical writing and translating German, Latin, French, and Italian.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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